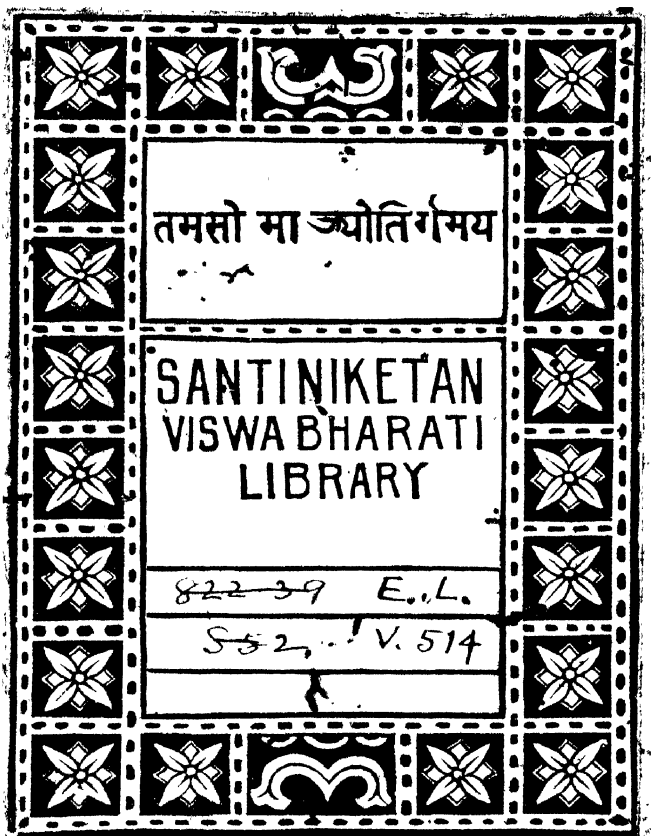

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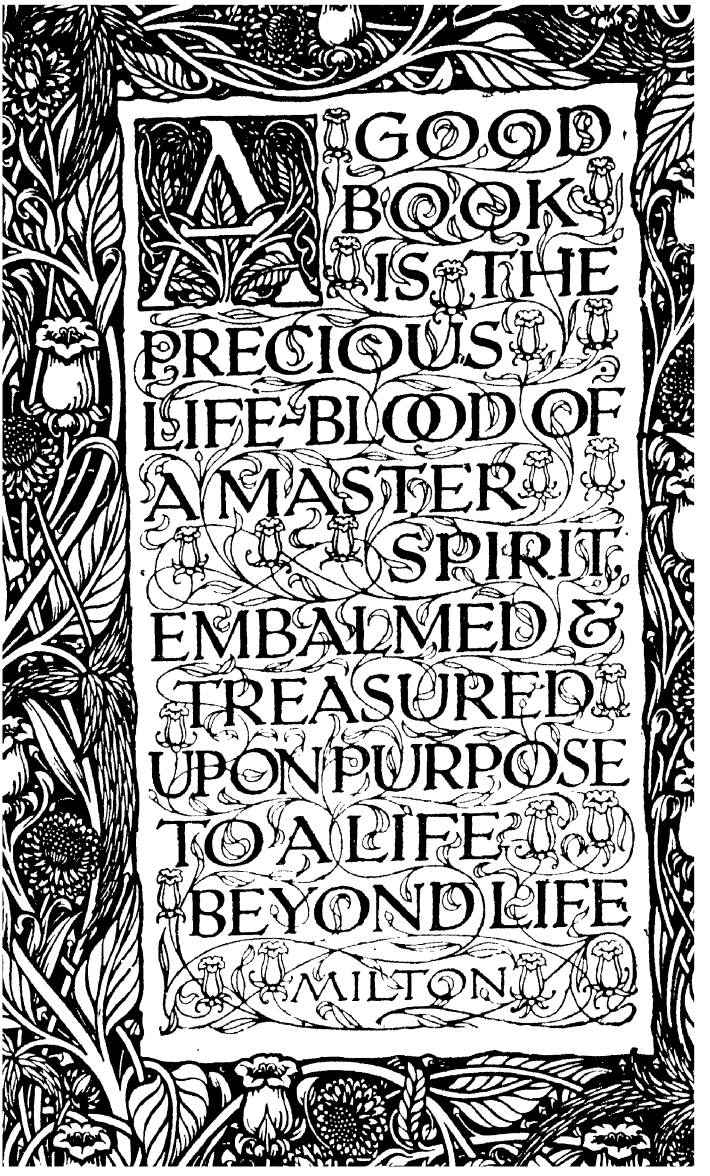
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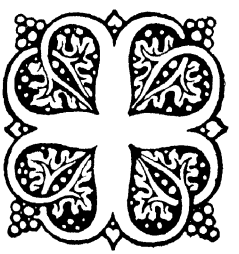


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SHAKESPEARE
HIS LIFE
AND WORK
BY OLIPHANT
SMEATON



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PREFACE

To relate, in a brief and succinct manner, the story of the life and the life-work of William Shakespeare has been my aim throughout in preparing this volume.

The method pursued has been to tell the story of the life, so far as we have it, parallel with the chronological order of the plays, so that the personality of Shakespeare might be more distinctly felt and light be thrown upon the play by the historic setting.

Its inception is not of yesterday. The patient and painstaking labour of many years is represented in it. I have endeavoured to introduce into its survey every fact with a bearing, however remote, on the artistic and ethical development of Shakespeare's nature and genius—not forgetting the recent discoveries of Professor Wallace of Nebraska. In addition to the analyses I have made myself of the leading characters in the successive plays, I have striven to supply the cream of English and Continental criticism on the works of our national dramatist.

Whenever possible I have gone to the original sources of information for the verification of facts. This has occasioned, in one or two instances, the introduction of an alternative date, where it seems to me unwarrantable certainty has been assumed.

For assistance and counsel ungrudgingly given by many University and other friends, I must express my sincere gratitude. To mention, however, the names of only one or two out of so large a company, would be invidious. Let this general expression of

gratitude be held as applicable to all. One name nevertheless—*clarum et venerabile nomen*—must be held as excepted, that of the most cultured of Shakespearian critics, Dr. Edward Dowden. He it was who first inspired me with the idea of preparing a work of this type.

The line of treatment as applied to all the plays is in every case the same: (1) The dates of composition and production. (2) Sources whence the material of the play was drawn. (3) Scene of the play and time-analysis. (4) Arguments as to the date of the play drawn from metrical tests. (5) The plot. (6) Analysis of the characters. (7) Synopsis of the leading critics' opinions on the play and its characters. Under these heads, the main features and qualities of each drama will successively be examined and analysed.

In the Appendices will be found summaries of the results accruing from putting into practice the various tests detailed in Chapter III. Further, it might be well that a thorough acquaintance with the meaning of the words, "light endings" and "weak endings," "end-stopped" and "run-on" (or *enjambed*) lines, the "speech-ending test," etc., should be acquired, as such knowledge will greatly facilitate the ready understanding of the critical portions of the volume. These terms are fully explained on pp. 52–55.

TO

JOSEPH MALABY DENT

FRIEND AND PUBLISHER

——" Divinest Shakespeare's might
Fills Avon and the world with light,
Like Omniscient power which he
Imaged 'mid mortality."

SHELLEY, *Lines written among the Euganean Hills.*

" A thousand poets pried at life,
And only one amid the strife
Rose to be Shakespeare."

R. BROWNING, *Christmas Eve and Easter-Day.*

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LIFE OF SHAKESPEARE

CHAPTER I

ELIZABETHAN ENGLAND IN SHAKESPEARE'S TIME

FEW will be prepared to accept unqualified Carlyle's famous dictum, "Biography is the only true history," but the same amount of objection will not be felt to his other statement regarding this form of literature, that "it is the most universally pleasant and the most universally profitable of all reading." Longfellow glancing at these opinions adds, "Whichever be true this is true, that a life worth writing at all is worth writing minutely."

To Shakespeare the principles embodied in these opinions have salient application. There is material in his life to make the account, if artistically presented, the most universally pleasant and the most universally profitable in the whole range of biography, provided Longfellow's dictum be kept in view—that a life so well worth writing should be executed with minuteness, in order that to each grain of biographic fact may be accorded its due weight and place.

Of the meagreness of our information regarding the facts of Shakespeare's life too much has been said. Without taking into account the details recently discovered by Professor Wallace, we know more of Shakespeare than of most of his contemporaries. To the statements of Steevens, many of them made out of a Puck-like delight in misleading his fellows, have been assigned a weight out of all proportion to his real standing. If we compare the facts that have come down

to us regarding the lives of such contemporaries as Marlowe, Spenser, Sidney, Drayton, Jonson, Raleigh, and others, with what we know of Shakespeare, we shall at once see that we know more of him than of any of the others, save perhaps in those points where their lives impinged upon politics, sectarian disputes, or discovery.

The day's doings of players and men of letters were of minor moment compared with those of such individuals as the world of the time delighted to honour—the warriors, the politicians, the courtiers, and the voyagers. Even Sidney, the hero and the darling of the spacious times of Elizabeth, was remembered more as the jouster, the brave man-at-arms, and the courtier, than as the author of *Astrophel and Stella*, of the *Arcadia*, and of the *Defence of Poesie*. In addition, that mania for minute biographical details about popular favourites of the stage or of letters was not yet in vogue.

The conclusion which, among others, the writer desires to lay before the reader is, that despite the note of humanitarian universality and cosmopolitan sympathy that runs through his work, despite too the impressive "forward-looking" modernism discernible in the plays of the Second, Third, and Fourth Periods of his genius and art, which stamps him in Ben Jonson's phrase as "not of an age but for all time," Shakespeare *was* a veritable product as well as an apt epitome of his own time. This dual characteristic of his genius it was that made Shakespeare the unparalleled imaginative force he became, for, by the peculiar constitution of his mind, he was able to identify himself with all other epochs, without losing complete sympathy with his own.

William Shakespeare was born, fortunately for the development of his own genius, at the very time when those social, intellectual, and imaginative forces were at their strongest, which had converted the Europe of

the Middle Ages into the Europe of to-day. The Renaissance, or the Revival of Learning and Scholarship, had, it is true, largely spent its force, but the effects of its work and influence were present in the notable number of translations of the chief literary monuments of classical times that had been issued from the press. The Invention of Printing had both increased the desire for the acquisition of learning and supplied the means for its gratification, by multiplying, in a few days, copies of books which the most expert transcribers could only have overtaken in the course of months.

The Discovery of the New World had widened the horizon of men's minds, and impressed on their imagination a sense of the vastness of the possible range of human endeavour and of the romantic potentialities that lay open to the ambition and the activity of man. Finally, the Reformation, in the good it effected in the Roman Church itself, by inducing the Counter-Reformation, also by promoting freedom of thought and liberty of private judgment in matters of religion, was not the least influential of the four factors operative when Shakespeare was a youth. These four mighty agencies, then—the Renaissance, the Invention of Printing, the Discovery of the New World, the Reformation—had all a share in bringing about that eager, romantic, chivalrous, yet in some respects credulous, temperament which prevailed in England from about 1570 to the close of the century. In the person of the "Virgin Queen"—she of whom Shakespeare wrote in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as "A fair vestal throned by the west"—at once the idea and the ideal of England's greatness was found incarnate. By every Englishman the conviction was elevated into an article of faith, and thus Elizabeth came to realise in her own person the belief of her people in the glorious destiny of the Island Kingdom, as well as that other conviction, every year growing

stronger, that, in some subtle, and as yet unknown way, England was to reproduce herself in a new World in the distant West.

Again, at the time when Shakespeare appeared, English Literature was losing its inchoateness and becoming in manner more artistic, as in matter more choice and intellectual. The poetry of the epoch after Chaucer had, in the hands of the misnamed Chaucerians, become so "loose-girt" as to forego almost entirely the rhythmic advance achieved for it by him who limned the pageant of the *Canterbury Tales*. The task, as regards our verse, of metrically bracing it up and rhythmically tightening it, fell into the hands of Surrey, Wyatt, Dyer, Watson, Breton, and the writers in Tottel's *Miscellany*. The stage having undergone its period of development, from the rude Mystery and Miracle Plays, first into the Morality Plays, then into the Interludes, thereafter into the earliest form of the Regular Drama in Udall's *Ralph Roister Doister* and in Still's *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, had been still further advanced by the efforts of Lyly, Lodge, Peele, Greene, Kyd, Marlowe, to a point in its evolution where the impulse of some supreme genius was needed to bring to completion the articulation of that highly complex organism, the drama of the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras. Finally, English prose was at that impressionable stage when it could most readily take on the refining influence of a great imaginative force like that of Shakespeare in the prose sections of his Second Period plays.

The Regular Drama was in England of comparatively late development, a fact proving of salient advantage to Shakespeare when, in the fulness of time, he came. He was not such an inexplicable marvel as some of our literary historians would contend, but was essentially the child of his time. The keener critical eye can readily detect in him the characteristics which distinguished his predecessors in the English Drama.

We find renewed in him almost every attribute of its growth: the headlong horseplay and buffoonery of the Mystery and Miracle Plays, the moral types and clear-cut characters of the Morality Plays, the dawning sense of dramatic form in the Interludes; the euphuistic art of Lyly, the note of idyllic beauty in Greene, the picturesque sensuousness of Peele, the amatory grace of Lodge, the satiric wit of Nash, the sensation and realism of Kyd, and the high tragic passion of Marlowe—all are present in the mighty reservoir of Shakespeare's genius. Their distinctive qualities seemed to survive in him and to constitute definite stages in the development of his mind and art.

It is well to lay stress on this complex heritage in our survey of the life. Shakespeare indeed must not only be read, but analysed, nay anatomised minutely, if we are to trace to their origin the minor nerves of feeling as well as the grand arteries of emotion and passion that permeate his work. Not as a static force in literature do we desire to study him, but as the dynamic power in Elizabethan drama which, while he developed his own genius through the four great evolutionary periods to be considered in this work, likewise assisted in the evolution of the whole poetic literature of his country.

These, then, are the qualities which constitute him the World's poet—his universal faculty of understanding all sorts and conditions of men and women, his subtle power of entering into their distinctively individual thoughts and idiosyncrasies, and his skill in dissecting with the most delicate of psychologic scalpels their most hidden reflections, their most secret ideas.

Shakespeare, therefore, is the amaranthine flower of English letters, inasmuch as the products of his genius are neither the essence nor the effluence of any special age, but the epitome and the expression of all.

Shakespeare has been styled an Elizabethan because

it was his lot to live the greater part of his life in the stimulating epoch of Elizabeth, not because he was that and nothing more either in sympathies or spirit. To such Georgian and Victorian readers as divested themselves of merely secular prejudices and were able to rise to the perception of universal principles of art in character-presentation, he appealed as forcibly as to the readers and theatre-goers of his own day. To speak of him, then, as "the greatest of the Elizabethans" is only true in the modified sense that the accident of birth assigned him to the epoch wherein he flourished. The phrase so frequently used, "our representative English dramatist," has also but a restricted significance, inasmuch as the profounder depths of Shakespeare's teaching, as regards the more pressing problems of art and of life, individual and social, have been plumbed by German, French, and Russian critics alike, with a sanity, and withal a certainty of judgment that has not been surpassed among ourselves. In these senses, then, Shakespeare, while taking rank as an Englishman and an Elizabethan, by the accidents of place and time, must also be considered a cosmopolitan and an "all-timist," if the late Professor Reed's term be permitted to pass the barrier of convention.

To all impressions that reached him, come they whence they might, William Shakespeare was so supremely susceptible that sources of influence, social, intellectual, ethical, spiritual, artistic, scientific, and the like, which modified the minds of other men only when they actually met them in objective contact, exercised a similar transforming power over him when he encountered them in reading or in conversation. In this way we can explain his marvellous erudition—not marvellous, certainly, if measured in an absolute sense by the standards of Jonson, Selden, Donne, or Bacon, but assuredly marvellous when estimated relatively to his opportunities of school training and early education.

Shakespeare was no polymath like Selden or Jonson, but he acquired a mass of knowledge utilised with rare skill and effect in his plays—knowledge also which had the amazing quality associated with it, that it was always available at call, was worn by its possessor as lightly as a flower, and finally, considering the means and methods of its acquisition, was curiously accurate. Like Walter Scott, he seems to have been ever on the watch for information that could be profitably used in his plays.

And yet, despite all this, no writer is less obtrusively autobiographic in his work. If we except certain very veiled references in the "Sonnets," Shakespeare's reported allusions to his own career are meagre and far-fetched. In most cases they are concerned with his early life, before he migrated to London, and require to be read in the light of an unquestioning faith in their applicability. Some writers seek to make him out a Puritan, from certain allusions which they either see or read into his works; others argue that he was a staunch Roman Catholic, basing their arguments on similar grounds; others, too, find in his dramas incontestable proof that he spent some time studying law, while others call in question his legal knowledge altogether. One set of writers assures us that he fought in the Low Countries, another set that he must have been a school teacher or usher, while a third section of students have no hesitation in stating that he must have devoted several years at least to medicine. In a word, so "full-orbed" a man, intellectually speaking, was Shakespeare, his capacity or power of assimilating information and his faculty or power of reproducing it being alike so marvellous, that some writers have based on this an argument against the Shakespearian authorship of the plays. To argue thus is folly. Shakespeare's mind was a unique mind that cannot be measured by ordinary standards of acquisition. That it was so is testified by

Jonson, by Heminge and Condell, by the author of the *Return from Parnassus*, by Francis Meres, and by several others of like standing who were his contemporaries.

We now proceed to the study of Shakespeare's biography and the events of his social life, as the great moulding influence in the evolution of his works, for the thesis that is here stated is that, despite the seeming lack of autobiographic revelation, to which reference has been made, Shakespeare's works were Shakespeare's self.

CHAPTER II

SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTH, CHILDHOOD, AND YOUTH

THE life of Shakespeare has been so often told that to repeat it may well seem a work of supererogation. To understand the process of the development of his mind and genius, or, in other words, to obtain the key to the problem of the chronological evolution of his works, the clue must be sought by a careful study of the conditions under which his earlier years were passed.

While the statement is true so far that no one wore his heart less on his sleeve than William Shakespeare, there can be little doubt that, whether admitted by him or not, the after-tenor of his life was unquestionably moulded by the earlier incidents which happened therein. Such occurrences as his father's pristine prosperity but later adversity, the boy's education, conducted in all probability according to as liberal a standard of culture as the place and the period allowed, with its sudden interruption about his fourteenth year; the change in his outward status, inevitable when the winter in his father's fortunes supervened; the gradua descent in the social scale of his companions, for those who might have been glad to play "Prisoner's Base" (*Cymbeline*, V. iii. 20; *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, I. ii. 97) or "Handy-Dandy" (*King Lear*, IV. vi. 157) with their school-fellow, the son of the prosperous Chief Alderman, would perchance not be equally ready to indulge in "Cherrypit" (*Twelfth Night*, III. iv. 129) or "Loggats" (*Hamlet*, V. i. 100) with the apprentice-son of the semi-bankrupt

"butcher-glover-farmer"—all these considerations, I say, must be taken into account in studying the evolution of his genius.

Such incidents inevitably left their mark on the impressionable mind and character of the poet, and must therefore be remembered when recording and analysing the development of his genius. From that point of view, our aim is to study the life and works of Shakespeare.

William Shakespeare, whom De Quincey aptly styles "the protagonist on the great arena of modern poetry, and the glory of the human intellect," was born at Stratford-upon-Avon, in Warwickshire, in April 1564. Investigation at once the most minute and extended has failed to find indubitable evidence of the precise day of the month whereon he saw the light. Tradition has recorded that his death occurred on his birthday. He certainly died on Thursday, 23rd April 1616; therefore, if the tradition be correct, he must have been born on Monday, 23rd April 1564. We have, however, one rock of solid fact whereon to rest our contention in the record of his baptism, which stands as follows in the register of the Church of the Holy Trinity, Stratford-on-Avon—

1564, *April* 26—*Gulielmus, filius Johannes Shakspere.*

The father of the poet, John Shakespeare, seems to have come of an industrious race of substantial yeomen originally settled in and around the hamlet of Snitterfield, lying three and a half miles to the north-east of Stratford. Here a Richard Shakespeare, presumably the grandfather of William, was settled as early as 1528, while his eldest son, John, who in 1561 took out letters of administration of his goods, appears in 1551 to have removed to Stratford, which offered greater chances of success to an aspiring youth.

To what specific variety of industry John Shakespeare devoted himself is difficult to say. Tradition has assigned to him a catholic range of vocations. He was a dealer in agricultural produce, a glover, a hide-merchant, a butcher, while wool, leather, corn, malt, are all named as falling within the scope and sphere of his efforts. For a time, at least, he appears to have retained some sort of interest in the farm at Snitterfield—all these diverse occupations testifying to an eager, ambitious nature that desired to push its way in the world.

From 1551 onward, until his death in 1601, probably about the seventy-third or seventy-fourth year of his age, John Shakespeare lived and laboured in Stratford with varying success. From 1556 until about Michaelmas 1572, he was fairly prosperous. His business steadily increased, and ere long he entered the Borough Council, gradually passing through the various subordinate offices, ale-taster, constable of the court leet, affeeror, chamberlain, alderman, head-bailiff, until he reached the Chief Aldermanship, which he retained from 5th September 1571 until 30th September 1572, when the winter in his commercial affairs seems to have set in. Unable to meet the municipal dues—either those which were assessed on the ratepayers of the borough, or those voluntarily assessed upon themselves by the councillors, for the relief of the poor, or for the equipment of the Stratford contingent to the county train-band—he had at last openly to plead poverty and dread of arrest for debt.

Whether or not his prosperity was due to his marriage is a point often discussed by Shakespeare scholars. One fact in connection with it is unquestionable, that by this union he obtained a connection with a local family alike of standing and renown. Mary Arden was the youngest daughter of Robert Arden, of Wilmcote, Aston Cantlowe, a village a few miles from Stratford, and there can be little doubt that the family in

question was related, whether closely or distantly cannot now be ascertained, to the great original stock of the Ardens of Parkhall, Warwickshire.

Mary Arden, on her marriage with John Shakespeare, might almost have been styled an heiress. She was endowed with the unfettered possession of Asbies, a house or grange with a farm of fifty acres around it, a sum of money amounting to about £50 in our currency of to-day, and an interest in two properties in Snitterfield. John Shakespeare's position in Stratford and the district around was doubtless materially strengthened, when men came to learn that he had married Arden of Wilmcote's second youngest and favourite daughter, and the husband was just the man to cause that factor to weigh for all it was worth in the advancement of his interests in the place.

The wedding in all likelihood (as Mr. Sidney Lee surmises) took place at Aston Cantlowe, the parish church of Wilmcote, in the autumn of 1557, and on the 22nd or 23rd of April 1564, William Shakespeare was born, being the eldest son but the third child. The house in which this event occurred, so interesting to the whole world of letters, still stands in Henley Street, Stratford, being the westernmost of the two houses purchased in 1847 on behalf of the "Birthplace Trustees" with the proceeds of an appeal issued by a few well-known men of letters and others. A singular circumstance regarding these two cottages is that while we have evidence that John Shakespeare purchased the easternmost one, or that which is not regarded as the birthplace, there is not a scrap of proof extant that the poet's father had any connection whatsoever with the other, or that which is regarded as the actual birthplace. "Yet this western house (adds Mr. Lee) has been known since 1759 as the poet's birthplace, and a room on the first floor is claimed as that in which he was born. . . . The fact of its long occupancy by the poet's collateral descendants

accounts for the identification of the western rather than the eastern tenement with his birthplace."

Shakespeare was fortunate in his birthplace, and not the least potent factor in moulding his genius would be the influence exercised upon his impressionable sensibilities by the early civic history and associations, romantic, legendary, and political, of Stratford-upon-Avon, a town whose existence, dating back to 691, has witnessed so many vicissitudes and changes that it may assuredly claim to be one of the most "storied" towns in the South of England.

That, however, was not all. Stratford lies in the very heart of those picturesque Midland counties of England where are some of the most charming rural landscapes in the kingdom. Of these, a contemporary of Shakespeare, Michael Drayton, has also sung in strains which, though they filled the spacious times of great Elizabeth and of James with sounds that echo still, have likewise in our own days a persistent reference and relevance to the same scenes. For the hills and the dales, the meadows and the woods, the streams and the springs of Warwickshire are so little altered by the lapse of centuries, that the place-names which did service in Shakespeare's boyhood's days do service still, scarce altered by so much as a dialectical inflection of the voice. "Leafy Warwickshire" it is to-day, and "Leafy Warwickshire" it was then, when the future author of *Hamlet* went a-nutting and a-bird-nesting amid its forest boles, and he has reproduced the local scenery in his plays with marvellous fidelity. "His poetry," says Mr. W. J. Rolfe, "is full of the beauty and the fragrance of the flowers that bloom in and around Stratford;" and any one who has seen the Avon at his native place must admit that it was of it he was speaking when he wrote in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*—

> "The current, that with gentle murmur glides,
> Thou know'st, being stopped, impatiently doth rage;

But, when his fair course is not hinderèd,
He makes sweet music with th' enamell'd stones,
Giving a gentle kiss to every sedge
He overtaketh in his pilgrimage;
And so by many winding nooks he strays,
With willing sport, to the wild ocean.
Then, let me go, and hinder not my course.
I'll be as patient as a gentle stream,
And make a pastime of each weary step,
Till the last step have brought me to my love;
And there I'll rest, as, after much turmoil,
A blessed soul doth in Elysium." (II. vii. 25.)

Many such landscapes, scattered throughout the poet's works, are almost photographically accurate reproductions of those scenes in Warwickshire wherein his boyhood had lain.

John Shakespeare, moreover, was an agricultural merchant who bought farm produce direct from the producers. Many farmers would daily be coming and going at the Henley Street home. From them the boy would pick up that profound knowledge of the flora and fauna of the Midlands, of farming operations, of woodcraft, of hunting, and of hawking which appears in his plays. He may make Milan a seaport, and give a coast-line to Bohemia, but he never errs in the nomenclature of any of the woodland crafts, and in *Richard II.* (III. iv. 29-66), in the dialogue between the Gardener and his servant, so intimate is his knowledge of garden-craft, that Mr. Ellacombe, in his *Plant Lore of Shakespeare*, says, "it almost tempts us to think Shakespeare was a gardener by profession." By excursions through leafy Warwickshire it was that Shakespeare, like Wordsworth, learned the secrets of the inner soul of nature, which he has revealed with such marvellous effect in what I may call his great "Nature Plays"—*Love's Labour's Lost*, the action of which takes place in the palace park of the King of Navarre; *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which unwinds its bewitching chain of incidents in that fairy-frequented "wood near Athens;" *As You Like It*,

whose characters were merry men and women who lived like Robin Hood of England, and did fleet the time carelessly in the Forest of Arden as they did of old in the golden world; finally, the *Winter's Tale*, with its surpassingly beautiful scene of Perdita gathering flowers, "herself a fairer flower!"

To understand Shakespeare's intimate knowledge of Nature,—a knowledge in which his only rival is William Wordsworth—we must remember the scarcity of books at the period, and how the local folk-lore, with the wealth of rustic botany and natural history, would appeal to his receptive mind with a force whereof we, in these days of abundant cheap literature, can form but little conception.

Shakespeare's early childhood was passed amid scenes and sounds fitted to foster that seeing eye and hearing ear which are not the least of the poet's peculiar gifts. To him the vision not only of Nature's life, but of Nature's soul, must have come early, since he was but a young man when his first poem and his first unaided play were given to the world. Such lore, be it remembered also, is not communicated save to the initiate who has acquired the fitting frame of mind by long-continued contact with the alternating seasons, their moods and their marvels.

Of his childhood we know nothing, unless we read an autobiographic element into his references to childhood and consider that he was speaking under the influence of early memories when he says, "'tis not good that children should know any wickedness" (*Merry Wives*, II. ii. 125); "My thoughts were like unbridled children, grown too headstrong for their mother" (*Troilus and Cressida*, III. ii. 130); "Is't enough I am sorry? So children temporal fathers do appease: Gods are more full of mercy" (*Cymbeline*, V. iv. 11); "As the indifferent children of the earth; happy, in that we are not over-happy." (*Hamlet*, II. ii. 228); "The remembrance of an idle gaud, which in

my childhood I did dote upon" (*Midsummer Night's Dream*, IV. i. 172). One thing in this connection may fairly be presumed, that up to about his tenth year, the home wherein his childhood was reared would be fairly comfortable and furnished with such conveniences and luxuries as were usual amongst the yeoman class of the period. On this point the late Professor Spencer Baynes says[1]—

"We know that Shakespeare was born and lived for twenty years at Stratford-upon-Avon; and we can say therefore with certainty, that all the physical and moral influences of that picturesque and richly-storied Midland district melted as years went by into the full current of his ardent blood, became indeed the vital element, the very breath of life his expanding spirit breathed. We know a good deal about his home, his parents, and his domestic surroundings; and these powerful factors in the development of any mind gifted with insight and sensibility must have acted with redoubled force on a nature so richly and harmoniously endowed as that of the Stratford poet. It would be difficult indeed to over-estimate the combined effect of these vital elements on his capacious and retentive mind, a mind in which the receptive and the creative powers were so equally poised and also of such unrivalled strength."

These years, then, would practically be the "making-time" of Shakespeare's youth. Providence was kind in not permitting his father's misfortunes to come until his son had reached the age he did. His home, as the dwelling of one of the leading magistrates of the town, was certain to have manifested a measure of culture and refinement, as far as these terms are applicable to the time, which the impressionable boy would not be slow to lay to heart. There would always be, at least during his father's year of office as Chief Alderman or High Bailiff, a breaking in upon the insularity of rural remoteness, of such metropolitan personages and pageants, as would bring with them a vision of another world of character, of custom, and of costume altogether distinct from their own. Thus by the teaching of the great world without, by domestic influences, by the country sports and pastimes of the

[1] *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 10th edition, 1880.

period, and by association now and then with travellers and dramatic companies from London, the boy's mind would be steadily developed along wholesome lines of evolution. It is interesting to note that while John Shakespeare was Chief Magistrate, the "Queen's" and the "Earl of Worcester's" companies of players were permitted by him to perform in Stratford. Assuredly William Shakespeare would be present!

As to education, Shakespeare, in his boyhood, was fortunately situated. Ben Jonson's oft-quoted line, an opinion relative only to his own colossal learning, that his friend "had little Latin and less Greek," has, with reference to Shakespeare's acquirements, been understood by many to mean that he was a sort of superficial smatterer in matters relating to culture. Though entirely erroneous, unfortunately that view has still further been emphasised by Dr. Farmer in his essay entitled, "On the Learning of Shakespeare" (1767), in which he took up the position that Shakespeare knew no language but his own. "He remembered perhaps enough of his schoolboy learning," says Farmer, "to put *hig, hag, hog*, into the mouth of Sir Hugh Evans; and might pick up in the writers of the time or in the course of his conversation, a familiar phrase or two of French and Italian, but his studies were most demonstratively confined to Nature and his own language."

Recent investigations have largely discredited that theory. The Grammar School of Stratford, founded by Thomas Jolyffe in the reign of Edward IV., had been "re-created" by Edward VI. and taken under his patronage as "The King's New School of Stratford-upon-Avon." To the sons of the burgesses of the town the seminary offered the advantages of an admirable classical education *free*, the only condition being that pupils should be able to read. That accomplishment Shakespeare probably acquired by the aid of a "horn-

book," such as he describes in *Love's Labour's Lost* (V. i. 49)—

> "Yes, yes, he teaches boys the hornbook;—
> What is 'a, b' spelt backward, with the horn on his head?"—

superintended by some ancient dame with spectacles on nose. To the Grammar School Shakespeare was doubtless sent in 1570, when the teacher was Walter Roche, followed in 1577 by Thomas Hunt.

"As was customary in provincial schools," says Mr. Sidney Lee, "he was taught to write in the 'Old English' character, which resembles that still in vogue in Germany. He was never taught the Italian script, which at the time was rapidly winning its way in fashionable cultured society, and is now universal among Englishmen. Until his death, Shakespeare's 'Old English' handwriting testified to his provincial education." The general instruction that he received was mainly confined to the Latin language and literature. From the Latin accidence, boys of the period were led onward through conversation books like the *Sententiæ Pueriles* and Lily's Grammar, to the perusal of such authors as Seneca, Terence, Cicero, Virgil, Plautus, Ovid, and Horace. The eclogues of the popular Renaissance poet, Baptist Mantuanus, were often preferred to Virgil's for beginners; while the rudiments of Greek were occasionally taught, but only to very promising pupils.

The school hours were in winter from daybreak until dusk, while in summer they lasted from 6 a.m. until 6 p.m., as John Brinsley tells us in his *Grammar Schoole*, published in 1612, when little change had taken place in the method from that in vogue in Shakespeare's school-days forty years before. All work and next to no play seemingly, for the intervals were only brief breaks of fifteen minutes at nine o'clock and 3 p.m., with an hour at noon for dinner. He then adds, "It is very requisite that they should have

weekly one part of an afternoon for recreation, as a reward of diligence, obedience, and profiting; that to be appointed at the master's discretion, either the Thursday, after the usual custom, or according to the best opportunity of the place."

Shakespeare in all likelihood remained at the Grammar School until his fourteenth year, when the reverses in trade befalling his father, compelled the latter to remove his son from his studies, to give assistance in the business. The youth, therefore, was separated from the society of books, as well as from that atmosphere of culture, such as it was, which prevailed in King Edward's School. The seed, however, had been sown in that intensely receptive mind, and the lad, if books were henceforward less common companions of his leisure, had before him the great books of Nature and of man, wherein his studies were to prove of value so surpassing to his brethren of mankind.[1]

The question whether or not Shakespeare was a learned man I should be inclined to answer in this way, that he was possessed of wide general culture, but was by no means an exact scholar. His was a mind of an almost unique type, in which faculty or productivity and capacity or receptivity were present in equable proportions. The late Herbert Spencer's mind was of a similar character (*sed longo intervallo*), and Sir Walter Scott's may also be cited as one cast in the same mould. That Shakespeare had what Scott had, the power of finding his way through the intricacies of a Latin sentence, not by attention to grammatical rules, but by sheer sleuth-hound-like keenness after the trail of the sense, is the statement which perhaps comes nearest to the facts of the case. As regards French and Italian, a similar state of matters prevailed, while with reference to the remark

[1] *Tudor School-boy Life*, by Foster Watson. Introduction, pp. xviii-li.

that of many of the works in Latin, Greek, French, and Italian from which he quoted, no published translation existed, every student of the period knows how prevalent was the custom to keep translations, etc., in manuscript and to circulate them among private friends. Does not Meres, in his *Palladis Tamia*, speak of Shakespeare's own "sugared Sonnets among his private friends," and these must of course have been circulated in manuscript? The same custom prevailed among translators, and it is therefore perfectly possible that the quotations from the *Trinummus* of Plautus, the *Eunuchus* of Terence, from Saxo Grammaticus, and elsewhere, may have been read by him in manuscript, even although no published translation was known to exist. Too much has been made of Shakespeare's supposed lack of culture. The fact is that, taken all in all, he was perhaps as cultured a man as most of his dramatic contemporaries, if we except the really profound scholarship of Jonson, Selden and Chapman.

From his fourteenth to his nineteenth year William Shakespeare seems to have remained in or around Stratford, engaged in work certainly, but of what character has never been satisfactorily discovered. Some biographers would urge that he was at this time acting as usher in a school, others that he was in a lawyer's office, others that he was a butcher, and so forth. Perhaps the guess nearest the truth may be that he engaged in whatever line of work turned up at the moment, and that possibly he may have served in all the vocations named.

Although it is easy to overrate his acquaintance with law, as Judge Allen, of the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts, has shown in his *Notes on the Bacon-Shakespeare Controversy* that Lord Chancellor Campbell and others have done, still, after all such allowances as Judge Allen claims, have been made, there remains a residuum of technicalities, used with

such absolute correctness and unimpeachable aptness, that no explanation will meet the case that does not make provision for a legal training of some kind. It is, at least, probable that he served as an attorney's clerk for some portion of that unaccounted-for period of five years referred to above.

Another matter deserving notice is the probability already alluded to, that, in his boyhood, Shakespeare had been a spectator of the early representations of the drama. John Shakespeare, we have seen, brought the players to the town during his term of office as Chief Magistrate, and evidence is abundant that several visits were paid by the various companies during the next eight or ten years, though the Corporation in the end became puritanic in its ideas and prohibited them. We must remember that Warwickshire played an important part in the early history of the English Drama. The Miracle Plays had their English birthplace in the Midland counties, and of the various cycles of these, the Coventry, the Wakefield (or Towneley), the York, and the Chester series of biblical dramas, the first named is perhaps the best known, and is the second largest as far as individual plays are concerned. In all probability the "Coventry Series" would more than once be played in Stratford during the sixteenth century. Although Bishop Bonner, in 1542, forbade all performances of plays, religious or secular, in his diocese, a course in which he was followed by many other prelates, the prohibition does not appear to have been strictly observed. On the accession of Elizabeth, when Protestantism regained the ascendancy, the order was wholly ignored. Accordingly, it is probable that Shakespeare witnessed these Miracle Plays, also the Interludes, as well as the early though rude examples of the Regular Drama, to wit, those based on the Italian and Senecan model, such for example as *Ferrex and Porrex* (or *Gorboduc*), *Damon and Pythias, Jocasta, Tancred and Gismunda,*

Promos and Cassandra, as well as those of a purely English type, *Ralph Roister Doister* and *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, etc. In addition, the speculations of Bishop Percy, of Walter Scott and others, that Shakespeare might have been present at the celebrations at Kenilworth during Elizabeth's visit to Leicester, are now regarded as even more than probable, though of course, if a visitor there, it would be merely as a boy standing between the knees of his father, and not, as Scott makes him in *Kenilworth*, as the already famous dramatist, whose lines in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, on the vision of Oberon, were repeated by Raleigh in the hearing of the Queen and skilfully applied by subtle emphasis to herself—

> "That very time I saw, but thou couldst not,
> Flying between the cold moon and the earth,
> Cupid all armed: a certain aim he took
> At a fair vestal throned by the West,
> And loosed his love-shaft smartly from his bow,
> As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts:
> But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft
> Quenched in the chaste beams of the wat'ry moon,
> And the imperial votaress passed on,
> In maiden meditation, fancy free."

No one who has ever read the masterly scene in *Kenilworth*, where on Raleigh reciting the lines, Elizabeth, charmed by the matchless rhythm, as well as by the delicate compliment, marks the emphasis of the voice on each stressed syllable with a beat of her finger, but must have felt regret that the Kenilworth pageants occurred nearly twenty years before the *Midsummer Night's Dream* issued from the teeming brain of the world's master-craftsman in the drama.[1]

That Shakespeare did see some part of the Kenilworth revels is, as Mr. W. J. Rolfe says, very probable. Long years later, when he was writing that play with its bewitching scenes in fairyland, what more natural than that this youthful visit, to what must then have

[1] *Merry Passages and Jests*, by Sir Nicolas L'Estrange.

seemed to him veritable fairyland, should recur to his memory and blend with the creations of his fancy?

The next fact of historic moment regarding Shakespeare which meets us is his marriage. In November 1582, when in his nineteenth year, or, to be more exact, eighteen years and seven months, he entered into the bonds of matrimony with Anne Hathaway, the daughter of Richard Hathaway, a well-to-do husbandman of Shottery, a hamlet which lies some nine furlongs from Stratford. No official registration of the marriage can be discovered either in Stratford itself or in any of the contiguous parishes. True, some have supposed that the ceremony must have taken place at Luddington Church, about a mile and a half distant from Stratford, the registers of which for the period named have long been missing. Of that parish Thomas Hunt, one of his former schoolmasters at the Grammar School, was then vicar. Be this as it may, the only irrefragable fact regarding the matter is that on 28th November 1582, two husbandmen of Shottery, named Fulk Sandells and John Richardson, appeared before the commissary of the Bishop of Worcester, and entered into a bond whereby they became liable in the sum of £40 to free the Bishop from the consequences of any action should lawful impediment be afterwards found to the marriage of William Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway. The aim of this undertaking was to secure such a dispensation from the Bishop as would authorise the ceremony to take place after one proclamation of the banns.

The two sureties were evidently old friends of the Hathaway family. Both had been named in the will of Richard Hathaway, dated 1st September 1581, and proved after his death on 9th July 1582. Such bonds were not uncommon in England. They were often called into existence by the system of "precontracting," "handfasting," or "trysting"—to use the terms then in vogue on both sides of the Tweed.

Where officiating clergymen authorised to perform sealing ordinances were rare, or in districts visited by them only at distant intervals, " pre-contracting," or " handfasting," was common. Such, however, could scarcely be the case here, and after an examination of all the facts involved, one is forced to the conclusion that the preservation of Anne's reputation was the chief desire underlying this step, inasmuch as six months later (26th May 1583) a daughter was born to the pair.

Curiously enough, the day previous to the issue of the bond in question (viz., on 27th November 1582) a licence was issued from the same diocesan registry, authorising the marriage of a " William Shakespeare " with an " Anne Whateley of Temple Grafton." Some biographers have endeavoured to weave a romance out of these materials, suggesting that Shakespeare had been at one and the same time engaged to two different women. That is altogether an unwarrantable assumption. The two explanations which have attracted the most attention are the following: First, that of Mr. Sidney Lee, who says, " The husband of Anne Whateley cannot reasonably be identified with the poet. He was doubtless another of the numerous ' William Shakespeares ' who abounded in the diocese of Worcester." Now to differ from Mr. Sidney Lee, whose wide investigations and profound study of all Shakespearian data and theories justly entitle him to the position of one of our leading Shakespearian scholars, needs a considerable degree of courage, yet it must be confessed that the explanation of another of our great Elizabethan scholars, the Rev. Canon Beeching, appears the more probable, viz., that " the licence and the bond must both refer to the same marriage, or else you have a bond without a licence and a licence without a bond, and that the bond in the one case should be lost and the licence not be entered in the other, is exceedingly improbable." Mr. W. J.

Gray, in his exhaustive examination of this whole subject in the work entitled *Shakespeare's Marriage*, states that he has made a careful study of the Bishop's registers at Worcester, and has discovered other cases in which mistakes had been made in entering different surnames on the licences and on the bonds.

Shakespeare, therefore, was married towards the close of November 1582, his bride being his senior by nearly eight years. The step was one which at that moment prudence could not have recommended. As far as is known, he had no fixed trade or vocation whereby to maintain a wife. In all probability he was dependent upon an allowance from his father, though this might be augmented perhaps by a few odd jobs from relatives and friends. John Shakespeare could scarcely keep his own head above water, far less maintain a newly-married son. William, therefore, could not have chosen a more inopportune season to wed than when he did—a consideration which suggests the conclusion that William married without his parents' consent, possibly without their knowledge. Such a union, so evidently contracted in haste, did not give pledges of either an auspicious or a happy future. There are strong grounds for reading an autobiographic revelation into those sadly significant words in *Twelfth Night* (II. iv. 29)—

> —" Let still the woman take
> An elder than herself: so wears she to him,
> So sways she level in her husband's heart; "

also into that passage in the *Tempest* (IV. i. 15-22), and in founding thereupon a theory that Shakespeare was unhappy, at least at the outset of his married life. In the earlier years of Shakespearian criticism there was too great an inclination to regard our national dramatist as a sort of demigod, raised above the passions and frailties of average human nature. But " later Victorian " and twentieth-century critics

have taken a truer, because a more human, view of the "doings" of the man, William Shakespeare, in the light of the "sayings" of the immortal dramatist and poet. The more we study the "Sonnets," line by line, couplet by couplet, and finally, poem by poem, striving earnestly to set oneself at the same view-point as the writer, the more firmly is the conviction driven home; that no man would write as the author of these poems wrote, who had not both sinned and suffered, but had also realised, ere his life's sun reached its horizon line, that he is the noblest man who is in the highest sense master of himself, whose mind to him a kingdom is, ethically as well as intellectually, and who has enjoyed the exquisite felicity of complete conjugal reconciliation, because he was able to fight his way back to moral self-control by absolute self-conquest. The "Kingship of Self-Control" is the moral of Shakespeare's life.

In the "Sonnets" we have the revelation of Shakespeare's Gehenna of self-conscious guilt, in the realisation of his loss of self-control, that the "dark lady," be she Mary Fitton or another, tempted him from his loyalty and his duty (Sonnets 142, 143) to wife and to self, and induced the terrible crisis of the problem plays. In the end, however, his sovereign will regained its throne when he came to realise, in *Measure for Measure*, the unselfishness of pure love, such as His who,

> "When all the souls that were, were forfeit once,
> And He that might the vantage best have took
> Found out the remedy,"—

and of that conjugal love which forgives with a royal generosity. With his wife Shakespeare had no formal separation, but their hearts were sundered, and continued so to be, until there came, in the eventide of life, that full mutual understanding—when Shakespeare had regained the mastery of himself—that

caused the closing years of the dramatist's life to be suffused with the benediction of eternal peace.

In six months' time, as has been said, a daughter was born to William and Anne Shakespeare, being baptised Susanna on the 26th May 1583, while in February 1585 twins followed, named Hamnet and Judith, after Mr. and Mrs. Sadler, two staunch friends of the youthful pair. Than these three, Shakespeare had no other children, and as Hamnet died at the age of eleven, his hopes of founding a family were extinguished in his lifetime.

There can be little doubt that at this time William Shakespeare was a frolicsome, full-blooded youth, ready to plunge, without much thought of the consequences, into any jest or mischief that might present itself to him. Aubrey and others have preserved for us traditions of drinking contests with the inhabitants of "bibulous Bideford," and of deer-stealing raids upon the park of Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecote House. The latter episode entailed rather unpleasant consequences. The keepers of the park haled him before the knight himself, and if Rowe and other authorities are to be believed, he was "whipt and at last made to flee his native county to his own great advancement." Be the punishment what it might, Rowe was convinced that it was excessive and out of proportion to the offence. Therefore, "in order to revenge that ill-usage, Shakespeare made a ballad upon Lucy, and though this, probably the first essay of his poetry, be lost, yet it is said to have been so bitter that it redoubled the prosecution against him, and he was obliged to leave his business and family in Warwickshire and shelter himself in London. The following lines are said to have formed a part of the satiric ballad—

"A parliament member, a justice of peace,
At home a poor scare-crow, at London an asse,
If lousy is Lucy as some volk miscall it,
Then Lucy is lousy whatever befall it.

He thinks himself great,
Yet an asse in his state,
We allow by his ears but with asses to mate;
For if Lucy is lousy as some volk miscall it,
Then sing lousy Lucy, whatever befall it."

It must also be remembered that Sir Thomas Lucy, though a very pious man, was a bitter persecutor of all in the district who had any leanings to the Roman Catholic faith. He served as Chief Commissioner for the County of Warwick, "touching all such persons as either have been presented or have been otherwise found out to be Jesuits, seminary priests, fugitives or recusants . . . or vehemently suspected of such." Long years after, Shakespeare did take his revenge in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, where Lucy is satirised under the character of Mr. Justice Shallow, who, as the play states, belonged to a very ancient family, whose members for three hundred years had signed themselves "armigero" and "borne the dozen white luces in their coat," to which Shallow, in his anxiety for the honour of his house and their "attachments," adds, "It is an old coat." Then comes the sting, when the benevolent but blundering Welsh parson, Sir Hugh Evans, says, "The dozen white louses do become an old coat well: it agrees well, *passant:* it is a familiar beast to man and signifies love." Upon this point Canon Beeching aptly remarks, "When we remember that this charge of the *luce* had been associated with the Lucy family ever since heraldry was a science, and inevitably suggested their name, it is put beyond reasonable doubt that Shakespeare intended a personal affront; while by substituting twelve luces for three, which was the number on the Lucy coat, he kept on the windy side of the Star Chamber." [1]

[1] Canon Beeching pertinently says that in it lies a dilemma which gives pause to every believer in the Baconian theory of Shakespeare. Sir T. Lucy and Bacon were very intimate friends: if Bacon wrote the Shakespearian dramas would he be likely wantonly to insult his best friends? *Cf.* the Canon's book on *Shakespeare, Player, Playmaker, and Poet*, 1908.

Whether Shakespeare's departure from Stratford was occasioned by this episode, or was due to the straitened circumstances of his father, who had now, in all probability, become so poor as to be unable to find support for his son and his increasing family, during the year 1585 our dramatist left his native town and turned his face towards the metropolis, for so many centuries the Mecca of every literary aspirant's devotion.

The dates of his departure from Stratford and arrival in London are exceedingly vague. By some biographers he is said to have passed some time as an usher in a school in one of the villages adjoining Stratford, while others have thought he was engaged in copying in an attorney's office. Mr. Sidney Lee thinks he trudged to London afoot, by way of Oxford and High Wycombe, tradition favouring that route rather than the other by Banbury and Aylesbury. In this connection, also, it is at least a probable supposition that if Shakespeare did not reach London in 1585 or very early in 1586, he would not do so until 1587, owing to the large exodus of the inhabitants through the visitation of the plague.

A tolerable consensus of tradition asserts that his first employment in London was in connection with the theatres, inside or outside, *i.e.*, either as a servitor or prompter's call-boy, or as a sort of unattached groom, ready to hold the horses of those gentlemen who rode to the play. Nay, report goes further, and states that in the latter capacity he acquitted himself so well that he obtained more custom than he could undertake. So many called for "Will Shakespeare" that he had to organise a corps of helpers, who, when Shakespeare was summoned, were instructed to say, "I am Shakespeare's boy, sir." Whether or not he ever acted as horse-holder *outside*, the presumption is probable that before the close of 1587 he must have been employed inside the playhouse in "Shoreditch" known as "The Theatre."

How he spent the years from 1587 to 1592, when Greene's reference to him appeared, is unknown. The probability is strong that no sooner had he obtained a footing in "The Theatre" than he revealed a faculty of initiative and a capacity for taking pains which soon attracted the attention of the Burbages, father and son (James, the builder of the theatre, and Richard, the greatest tragic actor of the day), by whom he had been engaged. How Shakespeare had first been brought into contact with them is unknown, but possibly, when the company known as "Lord Leicester's" had visited Stratford in 1587, Shakespeare's friends may have called the attention of the players to the homeless youth, rumours of whose search for employment about the London theatres had doubtless reached his native place. Burbage may already have noted the lad, and on his return have given him the chance which was to be the only stepping-stone needed to inaugurate the most wonderful dramatic career the world has seen.

From the year 1587 he would probably pass rapidly through the grades of call-boy, "super," actor of subordinate parts, until finally his ability was found to be capable of successfully discharging almost any histrionic responsibility that might be laid upon him.

Possibly by mere accident, possibly by deduction from what he could do in other departments of theatrical work, still another faculty of this wondrous man was called into action. Mayhap an old play dating back a few years was suddenly found suitable to meet some popular demand of the moment. It must, however, in the shortest possible space, perhaps but a few hours, be adapted to meet current opinions on some special topic of the time. To summon the accustomed help of the "University wits," as they were called, Lyly, Greene, Peele, Lodge, Marlowe, Nash, and Kyd, was impossible. William Shakespeare, the rising young actor, mayhap begs leave of

Burbage to try his 'prentice hand in cobbling the play into its desired shape. The result is amazingly satisfactory, and Burbage, now more than ever, determines to keep his eye on this strangely versatile man.

And thus, as Mr. Richard Simpson has pointed out in his entrancing work, *The School of Shakespeare*, so deftly did our dramatist achieve this kind of work, which formerly had been regarded as the prescriptive province of the circle of University playwrights in question, that his manager from that time onward kept him busily engaged as the "adapter" for the theatre.

Such in all probability was the manner in which William Shakespeare obtained his footing on the London stage. We shall now pass from Shakespeare the adapter to Shakespeare the poet and dramatist.

CHAPTER III

FROM PLAY-COBBLER TO DRAMATIST

ALTHOUGH the fact becomes increasingly apparent to every student of the literary period during which Shakespeare flourished, that as a historic character his personality is more elusive than that of many of his Elizabethan contemporaries, still " Shakespeare the Man " has impressed himself indelibly upon his works. As we study the development of his genius visible in his work as play-cobbler, poet, dramatist, and actor, we are continually casting a backward glance upon the life of the Man, to elucidate difficulties or obscurities in the writings. To argue, as some have done, that Shakespeare's plays and poems are in no sense self-revelations, is deliberately to deprive oneself of a large part of the pleasure to be derived from the study of his marvellously varied career. That the method is beset with dangers, no one who has given attention to the literary legacy our national dramatist has bequeathed to us, would for a moment deny. Nor would any critic, truly alive to the sanctities as well as to the symmetries of life, be prepared to contend that in *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, and *King Lear* we must strive to discover the key to the autobiographic mystery which it is assumed Shakespeare has locked up in each of these supreme creations. That would be subjective analysis run mad! On the other hand, to the observant student of the poet's life, and more particularly to those familiar with the workaday rural existence of Warwickshire and Staffordshire, there are, scattered up and down the plays of his first two periods, manifold references to local scenes, characters,

and usages which cast an illuminating light upon his life. To explain the meaning of many passages in the *Taming of the Shrew*, the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, *As You Like It*, etc., as well as in the Sonnets, on any other hypothesis than an autobiographic one would be difficult.

In our present study, therefore, we shall refer to "Shakespeare the Man" whenever we conceive additional light can be thrown upon the life from allusions in the works, or upon disputed points in the works from the facts of the life.

For Shakespeare, in a dramatic as well as in an historical sense, was a product of his age, with all its magnificent potentialities and possibilities. That he imbibed, unconsciously but none the less profoundly, the Renaissance spirit of Humanistic culture, is a fact so frequently affirmed that it has become a truism; on the other hand, this circumstance must also be remembered, that Shakespeare was the bond-slave of no system, whether that of Classicism, which was synonymous with Renaissance scholarship, or that of Romanticism, which, while it scorned the trammels of the Senecan tragedy, yet was not averse to assuming the infinitely harder bondage of the strait-jacket of Euphuism. From both, Shakespeare recoiled, though both to a certain degree influenced him. He already seemed to realise that his mission was not an epochal one, not even a national one, but one that was only limited by the aspirations and the idiosyncrasies of the race as a whole.

The outstanding merit of Shakespeare is that he never, like Ben Jonson and his "Sons," created mere "types" of moral or emotional singularity. His men and women were such as we might meet any day of our life's journey—men and women of similar emotions to ourselves, marvels neither of goodness nor of wickedness, but people cast very much in the same average mould of humanity as we ourselves.

At the time when William Shakespeare was born, the drama was rapidly assuming the place and the function of the great ethico-social, and spiritual teacher of the age. During the Middle Ages and the Early Modern period, the Epic was the vehicle through which the Time-spirit conveyed its teaching, assisted, though in a degree less marked, by the Lyric and metrical satire. To understand the mind, and the movements of the eras above named, we must realise, once for all, that the motive force at work in all the varied strata of the social crust was religion. To realise to-day, moreover, the extraordinary skill with which the clergy of the Roman Church of that time, from the Pope down to the humblest parish priest, made the exercises of religion—the feasts and the fast-days attached to the names of men and women whose title to remembrance was in most cases the constancy wherewith they had clung to their religious faith in the face of bitter persecution—the means of influencing both the souls and the bodies of the inhabitants of Christendom, is for us almost impossible. As the centuries rolled on, this society of humble and humble-minded individuals, whose prime doctrine was that all things should be accounted loss compared with the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord, swelled into the magnificent and stately hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church, with its complex machinery of Church government. Not by a hair's breadth, however, did it change its policy of making religion the prime business of a man's life, even although that religion might have become formal and lifeless.

The policy of the mediæval clergy was to keep the people in close touch with the material fabric of the Church. The task in those days was by no means easy. Printing was yet in the womb of the future. Any religious instruction, therefore, to be imparted could not be given by means of reading, the percentage

of the people that could read and write being small indeed. At this juncture the suggestion was made to visualise the mysteries of the faith by presenting them in concrete form to the mind of the faithful. The result was satisfactory, and thus the Mystery and Miracle Plays took their rise.

That the origin of the modern drama is to be found in these early religious plays there can be little doubt, and as we have evidence in *Hamlet* and elsewhere that Shakespeare had in youth witnessed their representation, we must investigate their character, to see if there be aught in them that could in any way contribute to the moulding of his genius.

On the continent of Europe the Church had long realised the value of religious drama. The fact was that in those plays certain parts of the Church service could be visualised to a people, of whose almost brutish ignorance we, in these days of excellent primary and secondary schools all over the land, can form no conception. Against the degrading theatre of the Cæsars the Church had boldly lifted up its voice. She could not, however, extinguish the mimetic faculty in human nature whereon the theatrical instinct rests. She therefore proceeded to turn it to account. As in ancient Greece, so in England the drama took its rise in religious ceremonial. The highly picturesque ritual of the ornate Church service was essentially histrionic in character, and was emphasised by the clergy. The liturgy of the mass, including the actions and the gestures of the consecrating priests, the chants and confession, the reading of portions of Scripture, the prayers and the responses of the congregation—all contained true dramatic elements. To these, *tableaux vivants* of scenes from the Gospels, often accompanied by song, were added, usually at Eastertide, and soon dialogue was written to accompany them. The burial of the Crucifix on Good Friday, and its disinterment on Easter Morn with songs of gladness, were favourite

spectacles authorised by the Church and performed by the priests for the instruction and edification of the people. Such spectacular ceremonies soon developed into definite liturgical plays. They were written in Latin, and as they were regarded as part of the service of the Church, they were performed by the clergy *inside* the consecrated edifices. Ere long the most striking and familiar scenes in the Gospels, also the more telling incidents in the lives of the Saints, as well as their martyrdoms, were taken up by the priestly playwrights. Thus the cleavage was introduced between scenic events based upon what was referred to in the liturgy, and representations of events not alluded to in the service. So long as the spectacles dealt with liturgical themes the clergy had no compunction about taking part in them. When, however, the representations had no connection with the order of service at all, although the rank and file of the priests still continued to engage in this profitable and pleasant mode of retaining their hold on the people, the higher orders of ecclesiastics began to frown on the desecration of holy things, and in particular upon lending the churches and the holy vestments for purposes which were far from being spiritually elevating if they *were* even doctrinally instructive.[1]

The religious drama, properly speaking, was divided into the two varieties, the *Mystery Plays* and the *Miracle Plays*. In England little difference existed between the two, or, to put the matter more correctly, the Mystery Play pure and simple was there but little known. On the continent of Europe the opposite was the case, and the following distinction was supposed to exist between them. The *Mystery Plays* were those which represented some biblical event or series of incidents, while the *Miracle Plays* were such as dealt with the legends or lives of the Saints.

[1] Cf. *The English Religious Drama*, by Katherine Lee Bates, pp. 35-70; *English Miracle Plays*, by A. W. Pollard—Introduction.

The most elementary knowledge of the origin of the English Drama, however, will convince the reader that such definitions do not meet the case as regards England. In our country no hard-and-fast distinction between "Mystery" and "Miracle" Plays has ever been drawn. The name "Mystery" in fact was rarely used, the term "Miracle Play" being employed to include both types.

The religious drama did not find footing in England in Saxon times, and thirty-five years had passed after the Norman Conquest before we have historic evidence of a Miracle Play being performed. In the year 1100 such a play was performed at Dunstable in honour of St. Catherine, being written by a monk named Geoffrey, who afterwards became Abbot of St. Albans. About the middle of the twelfth century, Hilarius, an Englishman and a pupil of the great mediæval "Doctor," Abelard, wrote three religious plays on the "Story of Daniel," the "Raising of Lazarus," and a miracle of St. Nicholas; while William Fitzstephen, in his *Life of Becket*, issued in 1180, bears testimony to the popularity of the Miracle Plays in the London of that epoch. At first the plays were performed in the churches, the clergy and one or two of the laity, chosen and trained by the Churchmen, being the performers.

By the middle of the twelfth century the crowds thronging the churches to see the performances were so great that difficulty was experienced in securing accommodation for them. In addition, very decided objection was now taken to the use of consecrated edifices for such a purpose. The liturgical drama in Latin, almost a part of the service of the Church, was gradually modified by the introduction of the secular vernacular drama. The higher orders of priests declined to take part in it, especially after the performance was withdrawn from the church to the churchyard. Soon the latter itself became too small to give even standing room to the crowds frequenting

the representations, and another migration was rendered necessary, first to the fields adjoining the towns, afterwards to the streets and squares of the towns themselves. This change finally debarred the clergy from further participation in the dramas, which were now performed almost wholly by laymen.[1] "Almost wholly" we say, because, although papal decrees were issued in 1210 and in 1227, prohibiting any Churchmen from taking part in the spectacles, the lower orders of clergy still for a time indulged in the amusement. Chaucer makes his parish clerk, "Joly Absolon,"

> "Somtyme to shewe his lightnesse and maistrye
> He playeth Herodes on a scaffold hye
> But what availleth hym, as in this cas?"

The close of the thirteenth century, however, saw the representation of these "Miracles" largely in the hands of the laity, and more especially in the hands of such of the laity as belonged to the Trade Guilds, who in many towns became responsible for the arrangements. However eager may have been the interest prior to the year 1311 in those religious dramas, after that date it was more than doubled. In that year a decree of the Council of Vienna was published ordaining that henceforward, on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday, the Feast of "Corpus Christi" should be strictly observed. By a number of the Trade Guilds that day was selected as their principal festival. Occurring as it did in June, not only was the weather usually fine, but the day was one of the longest in the year, thus permitting a lengthy programme to be undertaken of one of the four series of Miracle Plays. The "Towneley or Wakefield Cycle," the "Coventry Cycle," the "Chester Cycle," and the "York Cycle" were the four great series of Miracle Plays which at this time were being

[1] *The Mediæval Stage*, by E. K. Chambers, vol. i. p. 68.

exhibited all over England, wherever suitable performers could be procured.

These plays were produced under the direct patronage and presence of the Chief Magistrate and Corporation of many of the towns in Midland and Northern England, being attended by immense crowds. To enable all the inhabitants of a place to witness the entire play, the performances were conducted according to what may be styled a rotatory system. The spectators took their places at various "stations" throughout the town, and each scene, acted on a movable scaffold drawn by horses, passed in succession before them. The following is the account given by Archdeacon Rogers of one of the last performances of the Whitsuntide play at Chester in the year 1594—

"Every company had his pagiant or parte, which pagiants were a high scaffold with two rooms a higher and a lower, upon four wheels. In the lower they apparalled themselves, and in the higher room they played, being all open at the top, that all beholders might hear and see them. The places where they played them were in every street. They began first at the abbay gates, and when the first pagiant was played, it was wheeled to the high cross before the Mayor, and so to every street. So every street had a pagiant playing before them at one time, till all the pagiants for the day appointed were played."

The popularity of the Miracle Play was long continued, because it altered its character to meet the changing mind and inclination of the people. From about 1350 until 1500 there was no diminution in the interest with which the various cycles were regarded. The first stage of the Miracle Play may be said to have been that of the "Cosmical Cycle," when the history of the world from the Creation to the Nativity formed the subject of separate plays, each one dealing with a distinct event, such as "The Creation of Adam and Eve," "The Fall," "The Flood," "The Trial of Abraham's Faith in the offering up of Isaac," "Jephthah's Daughter," "David and Goliath," etc. Then, when the Life and Death of Christ began to influence

the faith and practice of Englishmen, during the miseries of the fifteenth century consequent on the Wars of the Roses, the Miracle Plays assumed the character of "Passion Dramas," in which emphasis was laid on the sufferings of Christ when achieving the great redemptive scheme for the salvation of humanity. Finally, the Cosmical Chronicle and the Passion Play were united into a series of spectacular pageants, each depending on the other, beginning with the Fall and ending with the Resurrection of our Lord, with the Death of the Virgin Mary, or, finally, with the Day of Judgment. Each of the Craft Guilds undertook to present one of these "pageants" or spectacles, and in many instances, owing to the low ebb to which Church zeal and enthusiasm for the welfare of the masses had fallen, this was the sum total of the religious teaching received by the inferior orders in the land.

These four cycles of Miracle Plays, the York, the Towneley or Wakefield, the Chester, and the Coventry Dramas, consisted respectively of 48, 32, 25, and 42 "spectacles" or acts, and each cycle had its own distinctive characteristics. Rude though they might be in many respects, they manifested a virile power, a genuine, if at times coarse, fund of humour, a felicitous knack of seizing and laying stress upon the essential features of a character or scene, all such qualities tending to hold the attention of the spectator when once it had been secured.

Attention has here been called to the Miracle Plays because there can be little doubt that Shakespeare, in boyhood and youth, had witnessed the performance of one or other of the cycles. Coventry was a centre in the Midlands where at different times more than one of the series had been played. Even though the contention be valid that the Coventry Plays had nothing to do with Coventry, but were associated rather with the North-west Midlands, it does not affect

the supposition that Shakespeare in his youth must have witnessed one or other of the cycles. In his plays so many references occur to characters in the Miracle Dramas that the connection is clear.

By the middle of the fifteenth century the religious drama began to give place to the moral drama. In other words, the Miracle Plays were being supplanted by the "Moralities," in which the *dramatis personæ* were the abstract virtues and vices instead of the characters of Scripture or of saintly legend, while the action generally centred round the conflict of the virtues and the vices for the soul of man. The most important of the "Moralities" were the *Castell of Perseverance, Everyman, The Pride of Life, Mankind, Magnificence, The World and the Child.*

The cause of this transition from the "Miracle" to the "Morality" Play lay in the growing desire on the part of the writers to achieve a form of dramatic art more genuinely human in its expression of the emotions. The spectators had little real interest in the development of scriptural characters. Only when Herod, Noah, Pharaoh, and Pilate showed themselves possessed of qualities of mind or of temperament distinct from the scriptural conception of them was it that they "caught on." The love of allegory was one of the striking features of the imaginative development of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and to this was due the growth of the "Miracle" into the "Morality" Play.[1]

The Morality Play, as a branch of dramatic literature, preserves much of the breadth and impressiveness of the Miracle Cycle. It typifies the struggle between the personified powers of good and evil for the possession of a human soul, a struggle beginning at the cradle and ending only at the judgment-seat of

[1] The whole question of the Early Religious Drama in England is admirably treated of in Prof. F. E. Schelling's *Elizabethan Drama*, vol. i. pp. 3-44; also *Cambridge History of English Literature*, vol. v. pp. 1-55.

God. For Shakespeare, the Morality had also its distinctive teaching, and the profoundly ethical tone of nearly all his dramas proves that he did not consider amusement and pleasure as the chief aim and end of art; while all personages in the great drama of life, of which the acted drama was merely the type or the shadow, were to him primarily and pre-eminently moral agents. Hence his view of the personages of the drama was not "how can these characters be made most attractive irrespective altogether of their ethical bent?" but "how can these characters work out their destiny in the face of given inherited or acquired obstacles?" It is that deep moral background, present, prominently or subordinately, in all his plays, and suitable, moreover, to every age and national temperament, which constitutes William Shakespeare the dramatic teacher *par excellence*. That he acquired his unerring ethical insight by patient study of the Morality Plays of his age is more than probable. The Miracle and the Morality Plays, with the lessons they taught, were two more of the manifold mountain rills that went to feed the mighty river of William Shakespeare's genius. In all likelihood he carefully studied both of these divisions of the drama in their mutual relations as well as in their distinctive differences.

Yet another rill of influence has to be considered as in all probability contributing to the unique many-sidedness of Shakespeare, viz., the "Interludes." These were the direct forerunners of the regular drama. In place of dealing with the stiff personifications of "Virtues and Vices," they created familiar social types under denominative appellations that indicated the character of the personage. The "Interludes" were of many kinds, Moral, Satirical, Humorous, but the essential idea common to all was a mingling of satire, jest, and instruction. Some writers have defined the Interlude as "farce dashed with fact." That, however, is only one of those attempts at

"definition by epigram" where failure alone can result from so unsatisfactory a process. Of this type of dramatic composition John Heywood, if not the founder, was at least the most noted writer. Living as he did in the reign of Henry VIII., whose hours of leisure he was wont to amuse by his wit and his musical skill on the viol, he at the same time produced some of the most perfect examples in our literature of the Interlude.[1] Perhaps the best is *The Four P's*, representing a contest between a Palmer, a Pardoner, and a 'Poticary regarding the dignity and usefulness of their respective professions. They meet a Pedlar, whom they appoint umpire in a trial of skill in lying. The victory was to be adjudged to him who should tell the most colossal lie. The contest thereupon proceeds right merrily, each piling up the most unspeakable falsehoods, when suddenly by a lucky stroke of imagination the Palmer strikes the others dumb with chagrin, yet unfeigned admiration, when he declares that he cannot understand why women should have such a reputation for ill-temper, for though he had met on his travels half a million of the sex, he has never seen or known any one woman out of patience. Needless to say, the victory was his.

In all likelihood, the latest developments of the Interlude were contemporaneous with the early growth of the Elizabethan drama, through its Senecan phase into that form in which it was handed on to Shakespeare by Lyly, Greene, Peele, Lodge, Kyd, Nash, and Marlowe.

Up to this time the "Miracle Plays," the "Moralities," and the "Interludes" had shown a purely English atmosphere and colouring in the social or domestic scenes portrayed. The personages might be Noah and his termagant wife, or Herod in one of his invariable outbursts of passion, or the Saviour before Pilate; but the life represented was always that of the

[1] *See* "The Four P's" in Hazlitt's edition of *Dodsley's Old Plays*.

England of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and early sixteenth centuries. As the "Interludes" began to shade off imperceptibly into the Regular Drama, the influence of the Renaissance began to make itself felt. As long as the drama was exclusively dependent on Scripture, little real development could be achieved. When, however, the invariable and inevitable tenor of the biblical story was no longer slavishly followed, when, moreover, in place of varying his plot only in very subordinate details, the writer of the "Moralities" and of the "Interludes" was free to adopt a plot of his own construction, with a complete freedom of choice as to characters, the door was already opened wide for the admission of *dramatis personæ* which would not be mere talking automata, but flesh and blood realities, full of like emotions and passions as ourselves. By definitely and finally separating itself from the leading-strings of Scripture story, by asserting its right of choice as regards both theme and characters, the English Drama had prepared itself for the reception of the great Renaissance influence, and had rendered possible the acceptance by a supreme world-genius like William Shakespeare, of this vehicle for the expression of his intellectual and imaginative message.

When the English Drama was at this stage in the process of its development, it divided itself into two distinct forms, one of these being the Renaissance type based on the Senecan model, and the other the English Drama proper, descriptive of English life and character. The former, as Professor Saintsbury says, was alien from the English spirit, and was unable to give voice or shape to English conceptions of the drama. It exercised, however, a very perceptible but deleterious influence upon the development of the native drama, for the early examples of English tragedy, in external form as well as in sentiment, and other characteristics, unmistakably imitated Seneca,

taking over his five acts separated from one another by choruses, his use and treatment of the chorus itself as detached from the action, and his occasional but by no means obligatory resort to the "Messenger" as the narrator of a catastrophe; for in Seneca and on the early English tragic stage, much business of this kind is transacted before the eyes of the public. The writers of our early tragedies likewise took over from Seneca sundry stock characters of his drama, such as the faithful servant and the confidential nurse, and above all, his ghosts and supernatural devices in general. Not less certainly was he their chief although not their sole guide in their choice of startling and often revolting themes, as well as in their use of sententious speech and rapidly antithetical dialogue.

Professor Ward's statement, as condensed above, contains the clearest and the most concise analysis of Seneca's influence upon the early drama of England. The fact must be kept in remembrance, however, that the influence in question was operative principally on the tragedy of the time. The comedy was in large measure preserved from participating in the effects stated above, by the circumstance that comedy devoted itself more specifically to the portrayal of English character and the description of English manners and customs. Such examples as Udall's *Ralph Roister Doister* and Still's *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, reveal a native drama of sterling excellence which soon overpowered the Senecan influence by sheer weight of dramatic interest.

This it eventually achieved, though it had to effect a sort of compromise during the progress of the struggle, between the Senecan and the English types, as, for example, in Preston's *Cambyses*, Edwards's *Damon and Pythias*, and "R. B.'s" *Appius and Virginia*. By these hybrid tragico-comic productions, the gulf between the "Interludes" and the drama proper of

Lyly, Greene, Peele, Kyd, and Marlowe was gradually bridged over.

Sufficient attention, however, has not been paid to the fact that so long a period as from thirty to forty years elapsed between the appearance, on the one hand of *Ralph Roister Doister* in 1550, and on the other of the dramas of Lyly, Peele, Greene, and Marlowe in the decade 1582 to 1592. The progress during that period of development was surprisingly slow, and the beginning of a new era of dramatic activity was not reached until the time of Lyly and his compeers. When, therefore, William Shakespeare proved his fitness to undertake the adaptation of plays to meet current demands and the sudden changes of popular taste, he doubtless was confronted with a vast amount of matter to which the name "theatrical lumber" could only be applied. The plays that had been staged before the days of Lyly and his contemporaries were rude and inchoate in the last degree. These, however, were the productions which, in his journeyman days, Shakespeare was called upon to alter to the forms desired by the taste of the time.

We have already seen that before Shakespeare began his great series of dramas, he spent some years of work as a journeyman playwright for the company of players he had joined. At this period he was certainly employed in recasting earlier dramas, and was probably engaged with unknown poets in the preparation of new plays. When there is ever any evidence in favour of his authorship, we are bound, as Mr. A. J. Symonds says, to weigh the question, and not to discard a work because it seems to us palpably unworthy. The possibility always exists that he may have had a hand in it, either as restorer or collaborator. In the introduction to *The School of Shakespeare*, Mr. Richard Simpson says: "It is clear, then, that before 1592 Shakespeare must have been prodigiously active, and that plays wholly or partly from his pen must have

been in the possession of many of the actors or companies. For the fruits of this activity we are not to look in his recognised works."[1] There are thus two kinds of Shakespearian remains which must be assigned to their real original author by the critic and historian. First, the dramas prior to 1594, which are not included in his works; and second, the dramas over the production of which he presided or with which he was connected as editor, reviser, or adviser.

Shakespeare, therefore, in addition to some such post as assistant stage-manager under Burbage, had been engaged in this play-cobbling or dramatic journeyman's work probably from about 1588-9, and had achieved no small reputation for the skill wherewith he was able to adapt, alter, or rewrite the pieces placed in his hands. Mr. Richard Simpson thought that the following plays were amongst those upon which the great dramatist had wrought: *The Famous History of the Life and Death of Captain Thomas Stukeley, Nobody and Somebody, Histriomastix, The Prodigal Son, Jacke Drum's Entertainment, A Warning for Faire Women, Fair Em,* and careful reading creates a strong presumption in favour of the theory. There were, however, several other plays, slightly later in date possibly, but still all falling within the early managerial period, regarding which no less strong a case could be made out, such as *Arden of Feversham, Sir John Oldcastle, The Birth of Merlin, Sir Thomas More, Locrine, Mucedorus,* etc., and Mr. C. F. Tucker-Booth, in his *Shakespeare Apocrypha,* very justly says, "It seems improbable for many reasons that Shakespeare had an interest in the original construction of any of the doubtful plays. When we consider the possibility, however, of his co-operation in the capacity of reviser or elaborator, there is less cause for disbelief. During his long and many-sided connection with the

[1] *The School of Shakespeare,* by Richard Simpson.

stage, the poet-manager would doubtless have had occasion to retouch and refine much of the inferior work which came to his company. . . . It is at present a thoroughly permissible belief, though one which can hardly be strengthened into certainty, that some of the splendid passages in the best apocryphal plays are thus the hasty and fragmentary creation of the master's hand." [1]

During those years when he was engaged on this play-adapting work, he had doubtless to alter the work of such men as Greene, Peele, Lodge, and even Marlowe, to bring it into harmony with existing modes and with the imperious demands of public taste. Neither James nor Richard Burbage was the man who, after readily swallowing the camel of appropriating other men's work to supply the needs of the hour, would strain at such an insignificant gnat as showing consideration for an author's feelings by asking him to alter his own work.

Six companies about 1587 catered for the theatrical wants of the age. By the provisions of the Act of Parliament of 1571 (14 Eliz., cap. 2), all players were required to procure a licence to prosecute their calling, either from a peer of the realm or "a personage of higher degree," otherwise they ran the risk of being treated as vagabonds. As, however, Elizabeth herself and many of the lords of her Court were generous in the interpretation of their powers of licensing, no actor of any standing ran much risk of not being able to procure the licence. Indeed, so interested were several of the nobility, that at the time when Shakespeare came to London they encouraged groups of actors to band themselves together into companies, to which one or other of the leading nobles of the period gave

[1] *The Shakespeare Apocrypha*, being a collection of fourteen plays which have been ascribed to Shakespeare, edited with introduction, notes, and a bibliography by C. F. Tucker-Booth, B.Litt. Oxford: at the Clarendon Press.

their name. Hence there were "the Earl of Leicester's servants," "the Earl of Oxford's," those of the Earl of Sussex, "the Earl of Worcester's men," also those of the Lord Admiral, Charles, Lord Howard of Effingham, while that band which received its licence from the Queen herself was called "The Queen's Players." There were thus six companies in all. The one to which Shakespeare had allied himself was that under the patronage of the Earl of Leicester, which (as Mr. Sidney Lee records), on the death of the Earl, passed in September 1588 under the patronage of Ferdinando Stanley, Lord Strange, who became Earl of Derby, 25th September 1592. When the Earl of Derby died, on 16th April 1594, his place as patron and licenser was successively filled by Henry Carey, first Lord Hunsdon, Lord Chamberlain (died 23rd July 1596), and by his son and heir, George Carey, second Lord Hunsdon, who himself became Lord Chamberlain in March 1597. After James's succession in May 1603 the company was promoted to be the King's players, and, thus advanced, it fully maintained the supremacy which under its successive titles it had long enjoyed.

This was Shakespeare's company, and he remained a member of it until the end. The work he now did, both as play-adapter and as actor, was winning him reputation, and he was rapidly ascending the successive rungs in the ladder of theatrical promotion. That this was so is evinced by the fact that he himself was considered of sufficient importance and his work of merit enough to arouse the jealous anger of poor Robert Greene. That unfortunate dramatist then lay a-dying in a low part of London, and thus addressed his former friends and collaborators, Marlowe, Peele, Nash, or, as some think, Lodge—

"Base minded men all three of you, if by my miserie ye be not warned; for unto none of you (like me) sought those burres to cleave; those puppets (I mean) that speak from our mouths, those anticks

garnisht in our colours. Is it not strange that I, to whom they al have been beholding; is it not like that you to whom they al have beene beholding, shall (were ye in that case that I am now) be both at once of them forsaken? Yes, trust them not: for there is an upstart Crow beautified with our feathers, that with his 'Tyger's heart wrapt in a player's hide' supposes he is as well able to bumbast out a blanke verse, as well as the best of you; and being an absolute *Johannes Factotum*, is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a countrie. O that I might entreat your rare wits to be imployed in more profitable courses, and let those apes imitate your past excellence and never more acquaint them with your admired inventions."

That this attack is directed against Shakespeare there can be no doubt, and the reason is not far to seek. Greene was jealous that the work of a "University wit" should be submitted to the adapting pen of one who had never seen the inside of any college.

Shakespeare and Marlowe had seemingly expressed themselves as exceedingly annoyed by Greene's statements after they had appeared in his *Groatsworth of Wit, bought with a Million of Repentaunce*, published in 1592 and reprinted in 1596. Possibly this Henry Chettle, who had been the editor of the posthumous tract of Greene, had only had his attention drawn to the bitterness of the allusions after the piece was in print, when of course it was too late to modify or to excise them. Greene died early in September 1592, the *Groatsworth of Wit* was entered in the Stationers' Registers for William Wright on the 20th September of the same year. Nash and others were so annoyed at the references to them in the production in question, and at the very idea that they might have had a hand in its composition, that the former, in his *Piers Pennilesse's Supplication to the Devil*, had called the tractate "a scald, trivial, lying pamphlet." [1] In all likelihood Chettle, to clear himself from further blame, considered it would be wiser to make the *amende honorable* without waiting for Shakespeare to move further in the matter. Accordingly, in his *Kindeharte's Dreame*,

[1] See Nash's *Works* (Grosart's edition), vol. ii. p. 7.

issued towards the close of the same year, he wrote as follows—

"About three moneths since died Mr. Robert Greene, leaving many papers in sundry booksellers' hands, among others his *Groatsworth of Wit*, in which a letter written to divers playmakers, is offensively by one or two of them taken; and because on the dead they cannot be avenged, they wilfully forge in their conceites a living author: and after tossing it to and fro, no remedy but it must light on me. How I have all the time of my conversing in printing, hindred the bitter inveying against schollers, it hath been very well knowne, and how in that I dealt I can sufficiently proove. With neither of them that take offence was I acquainted and with one of them I care not if I never be; the other, whome at that time I did not so much spare, as since I wish I had, for that as I have moderated the heate of living writers, and might have used my owne discretion (especially in such a case), the author being dead, that I did not, I am as sory as if the originall fault had beene my fault, because myselfe have seen his demeanour, no less civill than he exclent in the qualitie he professes: besides, divers of worship have reported his uprightness of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writting that aprooves his art." [1]

No man would have shown the solicitude Chettle here manifests to soothe Shakespeare's natural irritation under so unprovoked an attack, if the latter had not occupied a prominent place among the theatrical lights of the time, both as actor and playwright. "Exclent in the qualitie he professes," of course refers to his powers as an actor, and these, as we learn from the epigram of John Davies of Hereford, addressed to "Our English Terence, Mr. William Shakespeare," were of a high order.

"Some say (good Will), which I in sport, do sing,
Hadst thou not played some kingly parts in sport,
Thou hadst bin a companion for a king."

His play-cobbling, however, and his acting together, excellent though they were, would not have won for him such high consideration had there not already been evidence abundant, to which succeeding years were continually adding, that a dramatist of outstand-

[1] See *Kindeharte's Dreame*, by Henry Chettle, vol. v. Percy Society Publications, 1841.

ing merit was present also in that amazingly versatile mind. The first of his great dramatic periods forms the subject of the next chapter.

Before we pass to the consideration of William Shakespeare's "Early Epoch" in the evolution of his dramatic genius, with the works which were specific products of that period, we might for a moment glance at those metrical tests or aids to arriving at some approximate conclusion as to whether a play is to be regarded as of early or late date in the Shakespearian Canon.

The tests in question are nine in number, and may be briefly summarised. For the benefit of those who may not have devoted much attention to Shakespeare's prosody, the following very elementary remarks will perhaps be pardoned by readers whose studies have been prosecuted further. The Normal Shakespearian Metre is Iambic Pentameter (5xa), which, when rhymed, is called "Heroic Verse," when unrhymed, "Blank Verse." This measure consists of five feet of two syllables each, the second syllable in each foot taking the *accent* or emphasis of the voice, called the *stress*. Take the following couplet from *Love's Labour's Lost* as a typical example of the normal metre, x = unstressed or unaccented feet, and a = the stressed or accented.

Let fame—that all—hunt af—ter in—their lives—
x a x a x a x a x a
Live re—gistered—upon—our bra—zen tomb—
x a x a x a x a x a

This Normal Shakespearian Metre, however, is not regularly maintained; in fact, were such the case, his verse would become insufferably monotonous. It is therefore his more or less scrupulous adherence to this measure which distinguished his art in early years, as contrasted with the greater licence of later years, that constitutes the first of these tests, viz.—

I. More rigid adherence to the Iambic Pentameter measure is a feature of his early plays; and conversely greater licence in varying the *stress* is presumptive of a later date of composition.

II. The occurrence of the "end-stopped" line or couplet in the earlier plays, as against the "run-on" or enjambed lines in the later ones, argues an early date. An "end-stopped" line or couplet is one where the thought is completed within the compass of a single line or a single couplet. This habit is peculiar to his early plays. The "run-on" lines (technically called *enjambement*) are those where the thought "runs over" the line into three, four, or five lines. Cf. *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, I. i. for end-stopped verse—

> "Cease to persuade, my loving Proteus:
> Home-keeping youth have ever homely wits.
> Were't not affection chains thy tender days
> To the sweet glances of thy honoured love,
> I rather would entreat thy company."

As an example of *enjambement*, or of "run-on" lines—the mark of a later period of composition—take the following from *Hamlet*, III. ii. 70—

> —"for thou hast been
> As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing,
> A man, that Fortune's buffets and rewards
> Hath ta'en with equal thanks; and blest are those
> Whose blood and judgment are so well comingled,
> That they are not a pipe for Fortune's finger
> To sound what stop she please."

III. The frequent occurrence of Rhyme is a feature strongly favouring an early date, and it occurs in such diverse arrangements as (1) rhymed couplets, (2) rhymed quatrains, (3) a sextain, consisting of an alternately rhyming quatrain followed by a couplet.

IV. The occurrence of rhymed doggerel verse, in the two forms of very long lines and very short lines, is also a sign of an early date.

V. The frequent occurrence of classical allusions is an evidence of early date, also the existence of puns and conceits.

VI. The wit and the imagery of any passage, when wire-drawn to the point of exhaustion, is likewise presumptive evidence of an early date of composition.

VII. The presence of lyrical passages, such as those in *Richard II.* and *Romeo and Juliet*, is always indicative of an early date of composition. Still another point to be noted is, that in his earlier plays, Shakespeare uses a richer but less exact vocabulary and a more ornate imagery than in later years, when every word seemed to fit the thought with marvellous accuracy.

VIII. The presence, on the other hand, of Feminine or Double Endings, also the occurrence of the two forms of (1) light endings, (2) weak endings, are strong presumption of a later date of composition.

Feminine or Double Endings, also styled Hypermetrical Endings, are such terminations as are in excess of the regular number of feet and are unaccented, *e.g.*—

x a x a x a x a x a
To be—or not—to be,—that is—the ques—*tion*—
Hamlet, III. i. 56.

x a x a x a x a x a
The coun—terfeit—present—ment of—two broth—*ers*—
Hamlet, III. iv. 54.

Of *Light Endings* the following are the definition and chief examples: Light endings are monosyllables at the end of a line whereon the voice can rest to some very slight extent, such as—am, art, are, was, hath, I, thou, he, she, they, we, will, shall, may, can, would, could, should, while, where, when, etc.

Weak Endings are monosyllables at the end of a line whereon the voice can make no pause, but must go on to the next line, such as the prepositions—with, at,

too, from, of, in, by, on; and the conjunctions—and, if, but, or, nor, than, etc.

Light Ending.

—"I am full sorry
That he approves the common liar, who
Thus speaks of him at Rome."
Antony and Cleopatra, I. i. 60.

Weak Ending.

—"For the dearth,
The gods, not the patricians, make it; and
Your knees to them, not arms, must help."
Coriolanus, I. i. 73.

IX. The Speech-ending Test is also of great value. This is the ending of the speeches with the ending of the verse, a coincidence peculiar to the earlier plays which Shakespeare in his later periods avoided. Take the following from the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (III. i. 46)—

"For, love of you, not hate unto my friend,
Hath made me publisher of this pretence."

Also the following from *Coriolanus* (I. ix. 18)—

"*Marcius.* — that's for my country;
He that has but effected his good will,
Hath overta'en mine act.
Cominius. You shall not be
The grave of your deserving."

These rules, or tests, amongst some others of less importance, have been helpful in throwing light on the vexed question of the date of the composition of the plays.

CHAPTER IV

SHAKESPEARE AS DRAMATIST—FIRST PERIOD

SECTION I

OF the date when William Shakespeare began original dramatic composition we have no precise information. Possibly from the commencement of his histrionic career he may have been called upon to write in collaboration with others as the exigencies of the theatre demanded, though in all probability at first in a very subordinate capacity. No sooner, however, did the Burbages realise the value of Shakespeare as an asset of the company, than they would doubtless insist on him trying his hand on some theme that would afford scope for the peculiar bent of his genius.

For ordinarily constituted men, it is difficult to realise the rapidity of Shakespeare's development. He had left Stratford in 1586, a mere youth of two-and-twenty, yet probably with his mind stored with all the mystery and the magic of the rural scenes amid which he had lived so long. Familiar to him would be the marvellous procession of the seasons, the gradual waxing of the tender green of spring out of winter's gloom into the lush glory of summer; with summer's waning in turn into the old gold and russet of autumn, with all the attendant flora and fauna of each period. Of that fact his plays afford us ample evidence. There is scarce a flower that blows in the Warwickshire woods and meadows but he knows it and loves it. His *Midsummer Night's Dream* is a treasury of woodland sweets and sights and sounds, not as they were on the flowery bee-frequented hill Hymettus near Athens, but as they were reaped in

the harvest of his quiet observant eye by Avonside, or in Shottery, in Temple Grafton, or Hillborough, or Charlecote.

To him all the pleasant rural customs, of "maying" and of "mothering," of "beating the bounds," and of "the ingathering," with many others, were familiar scenes in their recurring seasons, while there was not a rustic proverb or folk-song belonging to leafy Warwickshire which he did not know and love. Amid the country glades and lanes he had communed with Nature's spirit and learned her mystic lore.

And now, with an aptitude for observation sharpened to an inconceivable acuteness, and strengthened in its retentiveness by perpetual practice, he came to London. There all the picturesque life of the spacious times of Elizabeth stamped itself upon the palimpsest of his mind with ever-increasing vividness. To the rustic lad, fresh from Stratford and Avonside, the sight of Cheapside and of the other streets was an education in itself, filled as they were with their motley crowd. Yonder are the ruffling gallants, clad in all the colours of the rainbow, the "roaring boys" ready to fight with their shadow, the great lords of Court sweeping by with their retainers, the merchants in their booths, ceaselessly shouting, "What d'ye lack, my masters, what d'ye lack?" as the mighty river of humanity flowed on past their doors. Here are "Inns of Court" men, in black beaver hats, silk stockings, and sober garb; shipmen, who had sailed with Drake and others to the Spanish Main or to the coast of Spain, to singe "the Most Catholic King's beard" in a right satisfactory fashion; soldiers, also home from the Low Countries, where they had been helping the Dutch to cast off the yoke of the same "most pious monarch." Nearer were fair ladies, making for the cloth merchant, to see his latest importations, accompanied by parties of the Romeos, the Tybalts, and the Mercutios of the time, while others of these *beaux* were riding to

the play, or hanging about the "French Ordinary" in Eastcheap. Present, too, were the justices, their portly paunches with good capon lined, with eyes severe, and beards of formal cut, discussing points of law, with a multitude of wise saws and modern instances. And then there was the *imperium in imperio*, the world of the stage within the world of men —what a revelation to him, and how it was all photographed upon the most retentive mental retina the world has ever known.

These were a few of the materials that went to the making of that wondrously kaleidoscopic imagination, capable of creating characters so infinitely varied in conception yet all so marvellously differentiated in detail. That Shakespeare ever forgot anything which had once firmly impressed itself on his mind, the internal evidence of the plays renders it difficult to conceive; while as analogical evidence we might cite Walter Scott, the man who of all others in fecundity of genius came nearest to him, and who had a memory for objective impressions absolutely unfailing. In a like connection we might cite Goethe, Dumas *père*, and Victor Hugo.[1]

When surprise is expressed, therefore, that in so short a time Shakespeare's experience should prove to be so broad and so deep, we must not forget to take into account the factor of his marvellous memory.

To Shakespeare had come at one and the same time a revelation and a repudiation—a revelation of that unique power of expression—otherwise the witchcraft of words—which he possessed, whereby in a few pregnant lines he could say more and say it better than three out of every five of his fellows; also a repudiation of the claim of any epoch or period in his literary development to be regarded as final. Every successive peak of achievement was but a point of observation wherefrom to view a higher one beyond,

[1] Goethe as reported by Eckermann.

and his greatest and grandest exertions seemed only to prove an incentive to toil still further up that solitary peak of supreme dramatic power, which none dare scale but he.

William Shakespeare, however, as we saw, had been no prodigy of youthful precocity; and in opening manhood the steady evolution of ripening power, which is the result of unwearied toil, was apparent in his works. He came into the kingdom of his own mind through regularly defined stages of development. Of these there were four, each representing a special phase of his intellectual and imaginative evolution.

The first period was Shakespeare's stage of "Immature" or 'prentice art, when he was still learning the secrets of his vocation, and when his hand was, comparatively speaking, still that of a tyro and a novice. This period included the play-cobbling era and the early years of his aided and unaided dramatic production, beginning in 1589 or 1590 and lasting until 1594.

This early or immature epoch was followed by that of his "Maturing Art," when his hand was gaining sureness of touch, and his intellectual and imaginative insight acquiring keenness and distinctness of analytic perception. This period lasted until about 1601, and included within its limits the era of his great comedies. From 1601 to 1607 was the epoch of his "Matured Art," when his genius was at its zenith, and when, in his marvellous "Problem Plays," he simply ransacked the universe of thought and feeling in order to tear the heart out of the mystery of Life, Death, and Futurity. Finally, after the *Sturm und Drang* of the Problem Plays had come and had gone, there succeeded the quiet and the peace of his closing period, "the Epoch of Romance and of Restful Contemplation," which extended from 1607 to 1612. Within this era fell his latest romantic comedies, all of them dealing with the

delights of re-united family affection, also of recovered honour and of re-cemented friendship.

Of these epochs in their order.

I. *The Epoch of Immature or 'Prentice Art.*—The outstanding characteristic of this period was his eager desire to learn everything in connection with the stage that might render him more proficient as actor and as dramatist. His term of play-cobbling had taught him readiness of mind and keenness of perception as to the relative bearing of an incident or of a personage upon the *denoûment* of the play. Progress towards perfection was phenomenally rapid. His past training in Stratford, the experiences he had undergone during his early London career, were all factors moulding his genius into a type as universal in its sympathy as it was unique in the catholicity of its creative art.

From about 1589 to 1594, Shakespeare's First Period, that of " Immature or 'Prentice Art," may be said to have lasted. Throughout its years he was patiently feeling his way towards an ideal of excellence beyond the imaginative reach of lesser men. Meantime he was content to do the work of the moment faithfully and well. In addition to adapting such plays as those already referred to (*see* p. 47), viz., *Thomas Stukeley*, *Nobody and Somebody*, *Histriomastix*, etc., of which it is probable that he wrote considerable portions, at points where he found the existing text could not be adapted, he certainly collaborated with one or two other writers in preparing the successive parts of *Henry VI.* A play entitled *The Contention between the two Famous Houses of York and Lancaster* had been written two or even three years prior to 1592. The authors had possibly been Greene, Peele, Lodge, or Nash, with some slight assistance from Marlowe. Shakespeare, as we saw, was a member of the company called first " The Earl of Leicester's Men," then " Lord Strange's Players," his lordship being their patron from 1588 to 1594; thereafter " Lord Hunsdon's or

the Lord Chamberlain's People," and finally "The King's Players," after the accession of James VI. and I. in 1603. In all likelihood the piece had been originally sold to the Burbages, who were the "heads" of the company, and after having served its turn had been relegated to the theatrical play-chest. Suddenly need arose for a play dealing with the age of the "Wars of the Roses," the old MS. was disinterred, and Shakespeare was asked to adapt it. He found so many contradictions in it, so many inequalities, along with so many positive errors in histrionic art, that he excised much of the inferior work and wrote several interpolated passages to supply the place of what he excised. Shakespeare's hand can be traced in the play along with that of Marlowe, while we have a clear indication, times and oft, that either Rowley or Dekker, and preferably the former, had the third hand in the revision. But Part I. occupies a distinctly lower plane than the other two members of the trilogy. It evinces a wanton overlooking of facts such as can be traced in none of Shakespeare's genuine historical plays. It is one thing to alter the perspective of events for dramatic purposes, but quite another to outrage all chronological truth. For example, the coronation of the Dauphin at Rheims is represented as taking place before the appearance of the Maid of Orleans, in place of being the climax of her career. In addition to this and other grave errors, the play misrepresents national traits. This Shakespeare never did. He was as generous to his country's enemies as to the warriors of his own land. All through the play, moreover, there is a crudeness of technique, an indefiniteness of treatment, and an absence of imagination that go far to prove that the share Shakespeare had in moulding the form of the play was but slight. His work was merely that of reviser-in-chief. The two or three outstanding scenes which seem to suggest that the hand of Ulysses was for the moment drawing

the bow, are (1) the account of the rupture between the rival factions in Temple Gardens, where Richard Plantagenet, the leader of the Yorkist faction, seeing his partisans hesitating to declare themselves by speech, instigates them to indicate their mind by "dumb significants" (II. iv. 27 ff.)—

> "Let him that is a true-born gentleman,
> And stands upon the honour of his birth,
> If he suppose that I have pleaded truth,
> From off this briar pluck a white rose with me."

To which Somerset, the Lancastrian leader, rejoins—

> "Let him that is no coward, nor no flatterer,
> But dare maintain the party of the truth,
> Pluck a red rose from off this thorn with me."

(2) There is the violent wooing of the Queen by Suffolk, and (3) the meeting and the death of the two Talbots. Part I., as regards its "basic parts," reveals workmanship of an altogether earlier era of the drama, overlaid by later revisional work, executed by an independent hand, directed by a strong original genius. A further conclusion is, that the same hand was reviser-in-chief of all three parts of the trilogy, and that, as regards Part III., a substantial portion of the drama was actually written by the individual in question.

What, then, are the distinctive qualities which warrant us in saying that these portions are Shakespeare's as distinguished from those of others? The special characteristics are: (1) a subtler harmony in the metrical flow of the style: the verse, in a word, becomes more choicely musical; (2) greater wealth of imagery, and greater truth to nature in imaginative allusions; (3) more symmetry in form and greater restrained power in depicting the emotions. Such are the qualities which are present in the Shakespearian portions of the First Part of *Henry VI.*

The scene is laid partly in England, partly in France,

while the duration of the action in the "First Part" is about eight days, distributed as follows—

ay	I.	embracing	Act	I. Sc.	i.-vi.; Interval.
,,	II.	,,	,,	II. ,,	i.-v.
,,	III.	,,	,,	III. ,,	i.; Interval.
,,	IV.	,,	,,	III. ,,	ii.
,,	V.	,,	,,	III. ,,	iii.; Interval.
,,	VI.	,,	,,	III. ,,	iv.; IV. i.; Interval.
,,	VII.	,,	,,	IV. ,,	ii.-vii.; V. i.-iii.; Interval.
,,	VIII.	,,	,,	V. ,,	iv.-v.

The following is the evidence gleaned as to date from the metrical tests. In the total length of the play, 2693 lines, there is not a single line of prose, but 2379 lines of blank verse, 314 lines of pentameter rhyme, while the presence of rhyme altogether is equal to about 10 per cent. Of feminine endings there are 8.2 per cent. registered, but no light or weak endings. Run-on lines exhibit a percentage of about 10.4, while end-stopped lines prevail largely. There are also numberless classical allusions, feeble puns, and wire-drawn witticisms, while the imagery, save in special passages, lacks sharpness and conciseness. The speech-ending test gives a very poor return, being under one per cent., the speeches, almost without exception, ending with the close of the verse. The result to be gleaned from the testimony of the metrical tests is that Part I. should stand in date at the head of Period I., or in date about 1589-90.

The plot is of course concerned with the events leading up to the "Wars of the Roses, the loss of the English possessions in France, and the exploits of the valiant Talbot, the great Alcides of the field," with the quarrels between the Duke of Gloster and the Bishop of Winchester. The character of Henry VI., as portrayed in Part I., is that of a very weak but inoffensive man, who, in place of an ideal of kingship, keeps an ideal of holiness before him. Instead of putting down quarrels with a firm hand, he utters

merely the unavailing regret, "O how this discord doth afflict my soul."

Many have complained of Shakespeare's reading of the character of Joan d'Arc, the "Maid of Orleans," as being paltry and unheroic. One can see no warrant, however, for believing that the Joan d'Arc scenes were written by Shakespeare at all.

The "Second Part" of the trilogy of *Henry VI.* is superior to the "First," but falls much below the "Third Part." It is based on a play entered upon the Stationers' Register, 12th March 1592, but which of course had been in existence on the boards of the theatre long before that time. This was "The First Part of the Contention betwixt the two Famous Houses of Yorke and Lancaster, with the Death of the good Duke Humphrey, and the Banishment and Death of the Duke of Suffolke, and the Tragicall End of the proud Cardinal of Winchester, with the notable Rebellion of Jacke Cade, and the Duke of Yorke's first claim unto the Croune."

The date of composition of the play was 1592, while it does not really appear in the form in which we have it to-day until the Folio of 1623. The materials on which the drama is based are taken from Holinshed and Hall; while the scene of the action is laid dispersedly in various parts of England: London, St. Albans, the Abbey at Bury, Kent—the sea-shore near Dover, Blackheath, the Tower (London), Smithfield, Southwark, Kenilworth Castle. The duration of the stage action is fourteen days, with certain intervals here and there representing about two years.

After it had been staged and played for some time, it seems to have been surreptitiously published in Quarto in 1594, having been taken down possibly by a shorthand writer, checked at a subsequent performance, and then issued as a correct text of the play. On comparing the Quarto with the Folio of 1623 we miss most of all the poetry of the Folio version, a

large proportion of this being absent, a fact probably due to the shorthand writer omitting all words that did not directly help on the action of the play. Against that we must place this other circumstance, that several passages in the Quarto edition of Part II. seem to have been subjected to a careful revision by an author who had already taken a leading share in the preparation of Part III. for the stage. After a careful study of all the facts of the case, one is inclined to agree with Professor Boas and Miss Jane Lee, that Parts II. and III. are only recasts of the two older plays, *The First Part of the Contention* and *The True Tragedie of Richard, Duke of Yorke*. The mutual relation of these four dramas is a very difficult problem. Careful examination of the internal evidence, however, suggests that the original play was written by Marlowe and Greene, with possibly some assistance from Peele, while the first revision was effected by Marlowe and Shakespeare jointly, but the second revision was carried out by Shakespeare alone. To any one who patiently examines the evidence *pro* and *con*, this fact will be apparent, that Henry VI., as we know him in Parts II. and III., is Shakespeare's creation, wholly and solely, and unless Heminge and Condell knew for certain that he was the author, they would not have included them in the Folio of 1623. Internal evidence, moreover, confirms the Shakespearian authorship of the plays. Many of the epithets and phrases which occur in them can be paralleled from Shakespeare's undoubted works. Dr. Furnivall has drawn attention to the extensive use of animal metaphors and similes in the plays, and is inclined to question whether these are from Shakespeare's hand. Others of the dramatist's early works, however, especially the *Lucrece*, present traces of the same characteristic, due partly to recollections of Stratford life, and still more to the predominant influence of Euphuism, whose outstanding feature was the extravagant use of

natural history for purposes of comparison. That Shakespeare and Marlowe worked together on the first revision, and that Shakespeare carried through a second and final revision after the death of his great collaborator, is most probably the best solution of the problem.

The style of the "Second Part" exhibits a decided advance on the "First Part." The language is purer and more chaste, the presence of a sort of restrained force, or power held in reserve, so characteristic of Shakespeare's work, begins to be more in evidence, and, as we shall see, increases in prominence even to the end. There is also manifest a faculty of verbal or phrasal scene-painting, whereby within the limits of a word or of a phrase he is able to conjure up before us an entire landscape. Such a passage as the following, spoken by the Queen, has no parallel in Part I. To the King, lamenting Humphrey, Duke of Gloster's death — slain through the machinations of the Queen, the Duke of Suffolk, and Cardinal Beaufort, and refusing to be comforted by her words —Margaret says—

> "When from the shore the tempest beat us back,
> I stood upon the hatches in the storm:
> And when the dusky sky began to rob
> My earnest-gaping sight of thy land's view,
> I took a costly jewel from my neck,
> A heart it was, bound in with diamonds,
> And threw it towards thy land; the sea received it;
> And so I wished thy body might my heart."

The metrical tests give us some facts of interest. Of the entire number of lines in the play, 3032, 448 are in prose and 2562 in blank verse. Of pentameter rhymes there are 122, while other rhymes appear to the extent of 2.9 per cent. Feminine or double endings register a percentage of 13.7; enjambed lines occur to a number representing a percentage of 11.4; speech-endings show a slight increase of 1.1, and there

is a frequency both of classical allusions and of puns and conceits. Feeble wit and wire-drawn imagery are still outstanding features in the verse. As in the case of Part I., the tests amply vindicate the evidence of the external facts that the play belongs to the outset of Shakespeare's earliest period.

The "Third Part" of the play is based, as has been said, on the earlier play, "The True Tragedie of Richard, Duke of Yorke, and the Deathe of good King Henrie the Sixt, with the whole Contention between the two Houses of Lancaster and Yorke as it was sundrie times acted by the Right Hon. the Earl of Pembroke his Servants." It has also a second title, viz., "The Second Part of the Contention betwixt the two Famous Houses," etc.

The time occupied by the action of the play on the stage is about twenty days, while the intervals suggest a period of about one year. The "Third Part" shows a greater ease in workmanship, and a readier appreciation of the contemporaneous development of the characters so as to produce a more harmonious *denoûment*. It also reveals, more than either of the other parts, traces of Marlowe, this being due to the fact that *The True Tragedie of Richard, Duke of Yorke*, had been less drastically handled, two-thirds of it being left practically untouched. The cause of this was possibly that Shakespeare's share in the composition of the original draft had been larger. There is again no prose in the play, and of the 2904 lines which constitute the length of the piece, 2749 are in blank verse. There are 155 pentameter rhymes, and of other rhymed matter in the piece there is a percentage of 3.4. Feminine or double endings are the same as in Part II. (13.7 per cent.). End-stopped lines prevail, and run-on lines register a percentage of 9.5. Speech-endings decrease once more below one per cent. There are a large number of classical allusions, of puns, conceits, and far-fetched imagery—all approv-

ing the evidence of the external facts to the date of the part.

The trilogy in its completed form must always stand amongst Shakespeare's minor works, (1) because none of the three plays was wholly his, and (2) because in them he manifests very unmistakably the immaturity of his powers. Only in the rough-and-ready humour of Jack Cade does he evince a promise of that profundity of humorous characterisation which in Falstaff was to reach its "nadir deep" of fathomlessness.

The character-drawing of the "Third Part" is still immature, and deserves only passing mention. Henry is a pious weakling, who would have made an admirable abbot, but proved one of the worst rulers who ever sat upon a throne. He belonged to the peace-at-any-price party, simply because he feared the turbulent nobility. The other personages, though manifesting an advance on Parts I. and II., call for no special mention.

The following passages may be of interest to students, indicating as they do the difference between Shakespeare's style and Marlowe's in the Second and Third Parts of *Henry VI.* Fain would I have pursued my investigations into the older foundation-plays of *The Contention of the two Famous Houses of York and Lancaster* and *The True Tragedie of Richard, Duke of Yorke*, pointing out the passages by Marlowe, Greene, and Peele, but that would unduly swell the size of the book. I must confine myself solely to the two parts in question. The following passages will serve the purpose desired—

Shakespeare.	*Marlowe.*
2 Henry VI., I. iii.	2 Henry VI., II. iii. ll. 1-58.
	2 Henry VI., III. i. ll. 282-330.
2 Henry VI., II. iv.	2 Henry VI., IV. x. ll. 83-90.
3 Henry VI., I. i. ll. 216-273.	3 Henry VI., I. i. ll. 5-76.
3 Henry VI., II. iii. ll. 9-47.	3 Henry VI., II. iii. ll. 49-56.
3 Henry VI., IV. iii. ll. 1-22.	3 Henry VI., IV. ii. ll. 19-30.

SECTION 2.—TITUS ANDRONICUS. *Circa* 1589.

This play occupies a curious position in the Shakespearian Canon. In all probability it is one of the earliest dramas on which Shakespeare worked, either as a minor collaborator with some other playwright, or as the reviser of another playwright's work. There is strong presumption that the writer in question was Thomas Kyd. Some critics detect a third hand in the material. If that were so, then in all likelihood Kyd was assisted in the original draft of the play by Anthony Munday or by Chettle, and Shakespeare thereafter adapted it for use by Lord Strange's men, revising it fully and writing in several speeches. The date of these Shakespearian interpolations was early in our dramatist's career. Mr. Sidney Lee thinks that *Titus Andronicus* was suggested by a piece called *Titus and Vespasian*, played by Lord Strange's men on 11th April 1592. Internal evidence, I think, points to an earlier date than that for *Titus Andronicus*, a date when the "raw head and bloody bones" style of dramatic composition was more distinctively in vogue. In connection with this point, a piece of interesting evidence is furnished in the "Introduction" to *Bartholomew Fair* (1614), in which Ben Jonson says that "the man who will swear *Jeronimo* or *Andronicus* are the best plays yet, shows that his judgment hath stood still these five and twenty or thirty years." This testimony would fix the date of the play in question as 1588 or 1589. Heminge and Condell seem to have had no hesitation in including it in the Folio edition of 1623, and Francis Meres, in his *Palladis Tamia, or Wit's Treasury* (1598), mentions the play as being undeniably Shakespeare's.

On the other hand, all internal evidence is opposed to such a conclusion. That there are several passages revealing the unquestionable Shakespearian touch,

either as minor collaborator or reviser, is undeniable, but one can scarcely agree with Professor Boas, that "the conjecture that he (Shakespeare) added revising touches to it finds no support in the character of the work." The Professor, like Mr. Swinburne, sees in the play "the unmistakable stamp of unity." We regret that we cannot perceive the same. Rather do we find with Dr. Furnivall, Mr. Sidney Lee, and Professor Dowden, that though Shakespeare may have had a hand in its composition, it is distinctively un-Shakespearian. Edward Ravenscroft, who issued a new edition of the play in 1678, says, "I have been told by some anciently conversant with the stage, that it was not originally his (*i.e.*, Shakespeare's), but brought by a private author to be acted, and he (Shakespeare) only gave some master-touches to one or two of the principal parts or characters." At the same time, we have no difficulty in accepting the statements of other critics, that a breeze from the Warwickshire glades blows fresh at times through the reeking atmosphere, and amidst the festering corruptions of a decadent society we have glimpses of Nature that make us less forlorn. To deny that such is the case in these familiar passages—Tamora's speech to Aaron (II. iii. 10), beginning, "My lovely Aaron, wherefore look'st thou sad?" also II. ii. 1-10; III. i. 22; IV. ii. 176, etc., would be to contradict the plain evidence of one's eyesight. Such passages, however, are assuredly the contributions of Shakespeare to the play, in his capacity either of collaborator or reviser.

The characters of this drama are scarcely cast in the mould of humanity. They are monsters of cruelty and wickedness. To Titus Andronicus himself, deeply as we feel he has been wronged, the meed of sympathy cannot be extended. Like Jeronimo in Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*, he alienates our regard by his needless cruelty. From first to last all the characters seem

literally inflamed by an insatiable thirst of blood. No terrible *were-wolf* of mediæval story ever longed more rabidly for the taste of gore than these *dramatis personæ* for the keen delight of cutting, hacking, maiming, mutilating, and finally murdering each other. No other term can suitably describe the drama than that it is a persistent " drench of blood."

This insensate sanguinariness it is which stamps the play as only in a very minor degree Shakespeare's work, either as co-worker or reviser. There is also another objection, viz., the lack of consistency and definiteness in limning the characters. Even in his earliest dramas Shakespeare's personages are all true to the mould in which they were originally cast. In *Titus Andronicus*, however, Demetrius and Chiron entirely change their natures during the play without sufficient cause being assigned for the result. The same objection may be taken to Tamora. The portrait is unequal. The original design has not been maintained. Now this never happens in Shakespeare's genuine work. Further, there is another quality which makes against its Shakespearian authorship; that is the coarseness of the characterisation, the lack of the most ordinary probability in the actions, and the unnatural motives assigned to them.

The scene of the action is given as " Rome and the country near it," but there is very little of the action indeed which transpires outside the walls of Rome.

The time-analysis of the play gives four days for the dramatic action, distributed as follows—

Day	I.	embracing Act	I.; II. Sc. i.
,,	II.	,, ,,	II. Sc. ii.-iv.; III. i.; Interval.
,,	III.	,, ,,	III. ,, ii.; Interval.
,,	IV.	,, ,,	IV., V.

Then as to the metrical characteristics of the play. Out of the 2525 lines in it, there are in all 43 lines of prose and 2328 of blank verse. Of these there are 144 pentameter or five-measure rhyming

lines, while of rhyme as an element in the play there is a percentage of 3.7. Coming next to feminine endings, we have a percentage of 8.6, while as regards speech-endings, the test results have increased to 2.5 per cent. The classical allusions, the puns, and conceits, the wit and imagery, drawn out to the last point of exhaustion, are all present in superabundant measure.

On these grounds, then, we would place *Titus Andronicus* high up in the First Period, in fact, the first play after 1 *Henry VI.*, placing it also in the category of plays only partially Shakespearian.

Section 3.—Love's Labour's Lost. 1589-90

When Shakespeare was thus busily engaged in acting and in play-cobbling, need seems to have suddenly arisen for a romantic drama that would treat of some of the contemporary topics of popular interest in a light, witty, breezy vein. To Marlowe, Shakespeare owed not a little in the way of inspiration and guidance. It may be seriously considered, however, if the debt he owed to John Lyly be not as great. Not only had he studied *Euphues* with care, but he had been a diligent student of the romantic dramas which the latter produced between 1580 and 1590, *Campaspe, Sapho and Phao, Gallathea, Endymion, Love's Metamorphosis, Mother Bombie, Midas, The Woman in the Moone,* and frequent traces of imitation are visible in the plays he adapted, also in his early dramas. Of the influence of Lyly in this piece there are numerous signs. The author of *Euphues* was exceedingly partial to allusions and illustrations based on natural history and botany, albeit these allusions were often drawn from a science devised by himself.

In *Love's Labour's Lost* we discover several indica-

tions that give a clue to the date of composition. Shakespeare doubtless intended to satirise the craze then prevalent for providing "Academies", or "Studious Retreats" for the study of Renaissance culture, based on those founded in Italy by Guarino da Verona and Vittorino da Feltre,[1] and the Spaniard, Juan Luis Vives. There was also the meeting in 1586-7 between the King of France and Catherine de Medici, which excited so much interest in Europe at the time as to the results likely to accrue from it—a meeting alluded to in the mission of the French Princess in the play. Finally, there was the arrival of the Russian ambassadors in London to secure a wife for the Czar among the ladies of the English aristocracy, the preference being indicated for Lady Mary Hastings. As has been hinted, the nature of their reception by the fair ladies of the Court of Elizabeth may perhaps be reflected in the fifth act of this play.

Little doubt can be felt that the absurdities of Euphuism, viewed apart from its benefits on the language, were fully apparent to Shakespeare, and that his satiric treatment of eccentric characters like Don Armado and his boy Moth reads like a reminiscence of Lyly's portrayal of Sir Thopas, a fat vainglorious knight, and his boy Epiton, in the comedy of *Endymion;* while the watchmen in the same play foreshadow Shakespeare's Dogberry and Verges. Hazlitt thought that if we had to lose any of the author's comedies, it should be this one. Yet he is obliged to add, we should be loth to part with Don Adriano de Armado, that mighty potentate of nonsense, his page (Moth), that "handful of wit," with Nathaniel the Curate, Holofernes the Schoolmaster,

[1] *Cf.* Rosmini's invaluable books *Vita di Guarino* and *Vita di Vittorino;* also Mr. Foster Watson's *Tudor School-boy Life*, or the Dialogues of Juan Luis Vives (London: J. M. Dent & Co., 1908); and Symonds' *Renaissance in Italy*, vol. ii. p. 209 ff.

and their dispute after dinner on the golden cadences of "poesy," with Costard the Clown, or Dull the Constable.

A comedy of caprice and of gay good-natured fun, with a war of wit between the ladies and their lovers, there is at the same time a quiet satiric teaching running through the whole piece, but expressed most clearly by Rosaline, that he who would be first must stoop to conquer, and that the truest sovereignty is the sovereignty of self-denying service for others.

The plot is simplicity itself, and is almost the only one in all the Shakespearian dramas which cannot be traced to some familiar source. The young King of Navarre has been infected by the prevailing epidemic of "academic seclusion," and prevails upon his Court, particularly his three chief officers of state, Biron, Dumain, and Longaville, to retire with him from the busy haunts of men, to see or to speak with none of womankind during the space of three years, to eat but one meal a day, and one day in the week to fast altogether, also to sleep but three hours o' nights, and not to wink or doze during the day. Such were the statutes recorded in the royal schedule to which their names were appended. The action of the piece consists in showing how, by unavoidable incidence of circumstances, these terms of the agreement could not be kept from the very outset, and thus King and courtiers became forsworn. The first two items could not be observed—those relating to studious seclusion and to seeing the face of no woman—because the French King's daughter had come in place of her decrepit, sick, and bedrid father to treat with the King of Navarre about the surrender of Aquitaine. The upshot of all is that the King and his courtiers fall madly in love with the Princess and her three companions, but the ladies do not see their way to accept the love of the gentlemen until they have put them on a year's probation to purge from their souls the

alloy of overweening self-esteem. The promise, however, is distinctly given that if they will renew the offer at the end of a year the ladies will accept them. Meantime the King is to "go with speed to some forlorn and naked hermitage," and there put his love to the test of solitary communion with Nature. To Dumain and Longaville no penance is set save bearing the period of probation, but in addition to the King's test, Biron is commanded to "visit the speechless sick, and with all the fierce endeavour of your wit to enforce the pained impotent to smile."

The characters are all clearly differentiated, and the gentlemen of the Court have their distinctive qualities finely shaded off from each other, while they maintain the common type of courtier-like complaisance towards superiors. Biron is the one character amongst them that is raised into mental relief by the originality of his nature. Dumain and Longaville are little better than lay figures, while the King is too often like old Polonius, a mere mouther of political platitudes. Were it not for the reflected light cast upon him, now by Biron, anon by Boyet, he would be utterly insipid. The honours of the play among the male *dramatis personæ* are carried off in the first instance by the brilliant repartee of Biron, also by the verbal sword-play and parry of the euphuistic Armado and his "tender juvenal" page, Moth; while Sir Nathaniel the Curate, Holofernes the Schoolmaster, Costard the Clown, and the stolid Dull the Constable, by their pedantry and stupidity provoke laughter that is hearty without being malicious. We love the last-named quartette for their colossal "muddle-mindedness," even as we love all the generations of their cousinhood—the Shallows, the Slenders, and the Simples, the Hugh Evanses, and Doctor Caiuses, the Thurios, the Gobbos, and the Nick Bottoms, the Dogberries, and the Verges, the Toby Belches and the Andrew Aguecheeks, the

Elbows and the Froths, as well as all the others we do not mention, with a love unspeakable!

Turn now to the ladies, and we enter a new world! They are distinctly superior to the male characters in all the qualities that make for strength, brightness, vivacity, yet withal "humanness" of sympathy. The Princess of France is a charming woman, more varied in the complexity of her feminine attributes than the King of Navarre in his masculine characteristics. Longaville and Dumain are but variants of him, supple-backed courtiers and little else. Biron, however, like Benedick of *Much Ado*, with whom he has much affinity, is the strong man of the play, the support whereon the King leans on all such emergencies as when "some salve has to be found for perjury," even as Rosaline is the bright particular star among the women, to whom her mistress instinctively looks when she desires to turn the tables upon the King and his courtiers.

True, the verbal sword-play becomes a little wearisome in this "Comedy of Affectations," as Mr. Charles Knight has styled it! Against the fantastical speech, the pedantic learning, and the extravagant love hyperbole of the age, Shakespeare directs the light artillery of his wit, but the satire is not acidulous enough, inasmuch as the poet has scarcely yet attained the art of exhibiting tediousness in his characters without becoming tedious himself. Costard and Jaquenetta, in their rustic love-making, are intended to throw the love-making of their betters into bolder relief, and the result is deftly achieved, while the songs of "Hiems, the Winter," and "Ver, the Spring," were in keeping with that lyric element which Lyly had introduced with such rare success into his comedies.

Of this play and its characters Hazlitt says, "We have some objections to the style, which we think savours more of the pedantic spirit of Shakespeare's time than of his own genius . . . it transports us

quite as much to the manners of the Court and of the quirks of courts of law, as to the scenes of nature or the fairyland of his own imagination. Shakespeare has set himself to imitate the tone of polite conversation then prevailing among the fair, the witty, and the learned, and he has imitated it but too faithfully." Thomas Campbell also remarks, " In this play there is a tenuity of incident that has prevented its popularity. The characters are rather playfully sketched than strongly delineated or well discriminated."

On the other hand, Professor Dowden says, " It is a satirical extravaganza embodying Shakespeare's criticism upon contemporary fashions and foibles in speech, manners, and in literature . . . but over and above this, there is a serious intention in the play. It is a protest against youthful schemes of shaping life according to notions rather than according to reality, a protest against idealising away the facts of life. . . . And yet the Princess and Rosaline and Maria have not the entire advantage on their side. It is well to be practical: but to be practical and to have a capacity for ideas is better. . . . Biron is yet a larger nature than the Princess or Rosaline. His good sense is the good sense of the thinker and the man of action." Of Biron, Walter Pater says, " In this character, which is never in touch with, never quite on a perfect level of understanding with the other persons of the play, we see perhaps a reflex of Shakespeare himself, when he has just become able to stand aside from and estimate the first period of his poetry."

The time-analysis shows the duration of the action of the play to have extended over two days, as follows—

Day I. embracing Acts I., II.
„ II. „ „ III., IV., V.

The metrical characteristics are all those of the very earliest years of Shakespeare's earliest period. Rhyme predominates throughout, in the form of

couplets, quatrains, and sextains, forming 62 per cent. of the entire 2789 lines, while lyrical passages, with a formal rhetorical tone, are prominent in many of the scenes, especially in the intercourse between the King of Navarre and the Princess of France. Rhymed doggerel verse, also, with final verse tags, are of frequent occurrence. Classical allusions are continually in evidence, while puns, conceits, and witty repartee are all prolonged to the last point of exhaustion, betraying tenuity of thought and immaturity of art. End-stopped lines are of very frequent occurrence, while run-on passages are, comparatively speaking, rare, only representing 18 per cent. of the whole. Feminine or double endings, also light endings and weak endings, are as yet almost unknown, the first-named only registering about 7 per cent., while there are but three instances of light endings. There is, however, more prose in this piece than in any other of the First Period plays, 1086 lines being the relative amount recorded on careful enumeration: while there are only 579 blank verse lines. All these characteristics, therefore, point to an early—a very early—date of composition, the conclusions of the internal evidence fully bearing out those of the external.

SECTION 4.—THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA. 1591

The next play to which we must devote attention under this First Period is the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, the composition of which many scholars believe to have followed closely behind *Love's Labour's Lost*, in the same year, viz., 1591. Mr. Frank Harris,[1] in his brilliant series of papers on the Shakespearian drama —papers containing a solid and important element of autobiographic fact, lays especial stress on the qualities of the youthful Shakespeare which he finds

[1] *The Man Shakespeare*, by Frank Harris.

exhibited in these plays. True, but I should go further and say, that while there is a subtle autobiographic element in well-nigh every play, if only we could light on the key thereto, in the evolution of each cycle of his mind's development there are, in addition, always one or two characters on which he lavishes more than usual care, because in them his own qualities of heart and head are portrayed. These are Valentine in the First Period, Jaques and Henry V. in the Second, Hamlet and Octavius in the Third, and Prospero in the Fourth—in every case a man who combines the active and contemplative temperament in himself or two men who together represent these dual phases of character. From these characters we may expect some autobiographic hints to be let drop from time to time. The difficulty is that we no longer possess the keys that would unlock such local allusions as so frequently are associated with the development of the characters in question. Be the *locale* of the play what it may, to Shakespeare it is ever the London or the Stratford of his day.

The plot of the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* was probably drawn from a Spanish source, viz., from the story of the shepherdess Felismena, in the pastoral romance of *Diana*, by Jorge de Montemayor. Of this an English translation by Yonge, published in 1598, had existed in MS. from about 1582, while a play founded on the story, and entitled *The History of Felix and Philismena* (Felismena), had been played before Elizabeth "on the Sondaie next after New Yeare's daie" in 1584. Further, Tieck, the German Shakespearian critic, indicated that the treachery and intrigues of Proteus in Milan may have been suggested by a play now known only in the German version used by English actors abroad, *The Comœdia von Julio und Hippolyta*.[1] *The Two Italian Gentlemen*, translated

[1] Tieck, *Dramaturgische Blätter*, vol. i. p. 50 ff.; also Schlegel and Tieck's Translation of Shakespeare. *Cf.* both.

by Anthony Munday in 1584, had also been consulted, while the sudden offer on the part of Valentine to surrender Silvia to Proteus finds its possible suggestion in the "Tito and Gisippo" stories in the *Decameron* of Boccaccio (Tenth Day, Eighth Story). Further, the simile of the waxen image held to a fire (Act II. Sc. iv. l. 201) seems to indicate a knowledge at least of Giordano Bruno's *Candelaio* (1582), which was one of the most popular Italian tales of the time.

Although the place of action is designated now Verona and anon Milan, the local colour is pure Warwickshire woodland scene-painting. What but the Avon winding between its sedgy banks could suggest such an illustration as—

> "The current, that with gentle murmur glides,
> Thou know'st, being stopp'd, impatiently doth rage;
> But, when his fair course is not hindered,
> He makes sweet music with th' enamell'd stones,
> Giving a gentle kiss to every sedge
> He overtaketh in his pilgrimage.
> And so by many winding nooks he strays,
> With willing sport, to the wild ocean." (II. vii. 25.)

And was it not the memory of rustic sports and pastimes as well as early dramatic essays that prompted the lines—

> —"at Pentecost,
> When all our pageants of delight were played.
> Our youth got me to play the woman's part."—(IV. iv. 160.)

or that led him to speak of "Ariadne passioning for Theseus' perjury" (IV. iv. 172) and of "these shadowy, desert, unfrequented woods," where he may "sit alone and to the nightingale's complaining notes tune his distress?" (V. iv. 2).

The metrical characteristics of the play are such as to bear out the external historical evidence. Out of the 2060 lines in the play, there are 408 in prose and 1509 in blank verse. There is but a small percentage of rhyme in this play, only 6 per cent. being

registered. Of feminine or double endings there is 18 per cent., while there is a decrease in run-on lines as against end-stopped lines, the former reaching only 12 per cent. of the total. Of rhyming lines there are 116 in the play. The speech-ending test shows an increase in the instances of its use, the percentage being 5.8. These characteristics, then, show a slight advance upon *Love's Labour's Lost.* There are still, however, present in the play a large proportion of classical allusions, of puns, conceits, and far-fetched witticisms drawn out *ad nauseam.*

The duration of the action, as shown by the time-analysis, extends to seven days, distributed as follows—

Day	I.	embracing	Act I. Sc. i.-ii.;	Interval of a month (or sixteen months).
	II.	,,	,, I. ,, iii.	
	III.	,,	,, II. ,, i.-ii.;	Interval: the journey of Proteus to Milan.
	IV.	,,	,, II. ,, iv.-v.;	Interval of a few days.
	V.	,,	,, II. ,, vi.-vii.;	III.; IV. i.; Interval, including Julia's journey to Milan.
	VI.	,,	,, IV. ,, ii.	
	VII.	,,	,, IV. ,, iii.-iv.;	V.

The nature of the plot is not only simple, but conventional to a degree, nay, at the time might have been regarded as "hackneyed." Those writers, both in verse and in the drama, were numerous who had described the trusted friend-lover that proved faithless and betrayed his friend's confidence, as Proteus had acted towards Valentine. It is in effect a stock subject of the novelist and dramatist in every age, and cannot but be embodied in certain stereotyped characters. Proteus, who at the opening of the drama refuses to travel with Valentine to Milan because he cannot leave his lady-love, Julia, by and by is compelled by his father to proceed thither. On arrival he finds that his friend Valentine has fallen in love with Silvia, the daughter of the Duke, and that she returns his affection. No sooner, however, does Proteus (whose name suggests a nature as unstable as

the ocean) behold Silvia than Julia is forgotten, and he begins, like a traitorous Judas, to betray his friend, that he may win the lady. To the Duke he reveals the fact that Valentine and Silvia intend to elope. Valentine accordingly is banished, and becomes a leader of outlaws in a neighbouring forest. Silvia, attended by Sir Eglamour, starts out to reach Valentine, while the Duke and Proteus, accompanied by Thurio—one of the great family of "Littlewits," to whom the Duke fain would wed his daughter—set off in pursuit. The tangled knot is unravelled when Valentine rescues Silvia from Proteus in the forest, when Julia, who has followed her recreant lover under the disguise of his page Sebastian, suddenly declares herself, and shames Proteus into loving her again, while the Duke, indignant over Thurio's cowardly renunciation of Silvia, gives his consent to the marriage of his daughter to the brave and manly Valentine, and the curtain falls over a scene of general happiness.

The lyric pathos and passion of the songs in the play are wonderfully attractive, and have expressed the feelings of numberless lovers from that day to this—viz., "Who is Silvia, what is she?" and "My thoughts do harbour with my Silvia nightly."

The characters in this piece show an advance upon *Love's Labour's Lost* in the clear-cut individual differentiation wherewith they are all shaded off. Amid a common similarity in type there is wide diversity in degree

The chief character in the play is of course Proteus. To the interpretation of his nature his name furnishes the key. Protean in mood, he is also protean in morals, for the friend who, when Valentine left him to see the wonders of the world abroad, said with trembling eagerness—

> "If ever danger do environ thee,
> Commend thy grievance to my holy prayers;
> For I will be thy beadsman, Valentine:"—

within a few short months seeks to encompass the ruin both in love and in life of the man whose welfare he had sworn to pray for. In his love of women also he is as mutable as the face of ocean—to-day declaring himself fathoms deep in love with Julia, to-morrow, after he has been brought under the influence of Silvia, belittling the former as "but a swarthy Ethiope" compared with the other! Nevertheless, when once more in the presence of Julia, the pendulum of his love swings back, and he cries—

> "What is in Silvia's face but I may spy
> More fresh in Julia's with a constant eye."

A nature such as this, unstable as water, unreliable as the fitful breeze that ruffles the bosom of the mountain lake and anon dies into absolute quiescence, is one that may probably be keenly alive to all æsthetic and intellectual influences, to all forms of beauty material or imaginative, but is by no means likely to prove a strong foundation, or even a reliable support, in the hour of danger or of difficulty.[1] As was the case in *Love's Labour's Lost*, Shakespeare relies greatly upon contrast, producing his effects by the use of contrasted opposites. Though the device is not carried to the same length here as in the other play, where we had the King of Navarre with his three courtiers contrasted with the Princess of France and her three ladies, Costard and Jaquenetta also forming the foils to Armado and Moth, there are nevertheless just as strongly contrasted types in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* as in *Love's Labour's Lost*. Against the fickle-minded Proteus stands the splendid figure of the noble-hearted Valentine—Shakespeare's own portrait—the man whose soul is the enemy only of wrong-doing and wrong-doers, and is the friend of all the world beside. To Valentine has been given a nature

[1] Charles Knight in Supplementary Notice of the play in his Shakespeare, *Comedies*, vol. i. p. 68 ff.

imperial in the radius of its sympathy. He is one who is ever ready to make excuses for a friend. In fact he goes too far, for, as Professor Herford says, "his offer to surrender Silvia to the man who has just proposed to outrage her, lacks not only psychological truth but psychological plausibility." Even after Proteus's villainy has been made known, on the latter soliciting his pardon, he cries, extending a hand to both Julia and Proteus—

> "Come, come, a hand from either,
> Let me be blest to make this happy close:
> 'Twere pity two such friends should be long foes."

The two fathers, the Duke of Milan, father of Silvia, and Antonio, father of Proteus, are also contrasted types — the former eager that his daughter shall marry Thurio, indignant that she will not bend her will to love where he wishes, and angry with Valentine for daring to look so high as the daughter of a Duke; Antonio only solicitous that his son Proteus shall not be inferior to other young men of his age in culture and accomplishments—

> "I have considered well his loss of time,
> And how he cannot be a perfect man,
> Not being tried and tutored in the world."

Antonio is wholly ruled by the social decrees of *comme il faut*, and whatever Panthino, his servant, declares to be the tittle-tattle of the town. A small-minded, self-opinionated, but irresolute man, ruled by others, yet ruling those dependent on him with a rod of iron.[1]

Thurio, like Sir Nathaniel and Holofernes, is a member of the great household of Shakespearian simpletons, those born to be the butt of others, who never see how the laughter of the world is expended upon them, but rest contented in their colossal stupidity.

Then come the immortal pair Launce and Speed,

[1] *Cf.* Gervinus, *Commentaries*, pp. 160-163.

the serving-men of Proteus and Valentine. They belong to that "liveried order" in which are to be found the Dromios and Moth, Grumio and Curtis, Pistol, Nym, and Bardolph, and others of that mirthful fellowship. Speed and Launce are allied yet contrasted types, each being still further contrasted with the master whom he serves. To the slow-witted Valentine is attached the nimble-tongued Speed, whose plays upon words, repartees, and snatches of doggerel sparkle upon the surface of the main action of the drama without stirring its current. Of greater significance is Launce, the attendant on Proteus. His is a richer, more pensive humour, which discharges itself mainly in soliloquies, with his dog Crab as auditor.[1] Launce's fidelity to his four-footed friend on the one hand, and to his master on the other, whom, nevertheless, he believes to be "a kind of knave," is one of the finest character-analyses among Shakespeare's earlier works. So true to life is it that one surmises whether or no it had been revised at a maturer period of his life.

Silvia and Julia, however, constitute the supreme contrast in the play.[2] They read but cursorily who do not see from the moment that Proteus meets Silvia, that the two female characters were intended to act as mutual foils, the strength of purpose and calm self-reliance of Silvia being thrown into stronger relief by the clinging tenderness and self-abnegation of the latter. Of Julia's battles the dauntless champion was not Julia herself, but Silvia; and no more stinging rebuke to infidelity in an affianced could well be conceived than that which Silvia administers to Proteus on behalf of Julia, all unwitting that the lady herself stood by her side (IV. ii. 90-133). Silvia's was the nobler nature, Julia's the more affectionate heart.[3]

[1] Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*, p. 218; Swinburne, *A Study of Shakespeare*, p. 49.

[2] Lady Martin, *Shakespeare's Women Characters*—Silvia and Julia.

[3] Drake, *Shakespeare and his Times*, p. 137 ff.

The former would act as a perennial stimulus to all virtuous deeds and devotion; the latter would account it her highest pleasure to endeavour to make Proteus's life happy from a domestic point of view, asking no further reward than his smile or caress. Silvia would, therefore, be the goad to her husband's ambition, Julia the strong domestic magnet that would attract hers to his own fireside. Silvia, on the one hand, had the instinct of feminine delicacy more fully developed in her nature. To fancy her donning the page's dress even to pursue and win back a recreant lover, would be equivalent to believing it possible that Diana, queen and huntress, chaste and fair, could stoop to folly. She had many traits in common with "Celia" of *As You Like It.* Julia, on the other hand, was the more sympathetic woman, willing to be all and to do all if only she might win back Proteus.

As Mr. H. N. Hudson, the American editor, observes: "Julia seeking out and attending her faithless lover in the disguise of a page, and even making herself the servant of his infidelity, is one of these exhibitions of female purity, sweetness, and devotion, in which Shakespeare so vastly excels all other writers. Though in this perilous situation 'the air hath starved the roses in her cheeks,' she hath parted with none of her maiden modesty and delicacy. Her innocence and gentleness of disposition are but the more apparent for the chill rough atmosphere which seems to threaten them; and if she provokes us at all it is by the too ready forgiveness of her penitent abuser."

Section 5.—The Comedy of Errors. 1591

The *Comedy of Errors,* the fifth play in the Period of Shakespeare's Early or Immature Art, has often been styled nothing short of a rollicking farce. Nor is the description inappropriate. Of all the Shake-

spearian dramas, there is none that exhibits in equal measure with the piece now before us, the qualities of headlong fun and boisterous horseplay.

The date of composition cannot be stated with absolute precision. Existing external as well as internal evidence, however, points to some date between 1589-91 as being the probable time. The play did not appear in Quarto form at all, but was first printed in the Folio of 1623. A statement made in the *Gesta Grayorum* declares that a *Comedie of Errours* was performed at Gray's Inn on 28th December 1594, and that it resembled the *Menæchmi* of Plautus. Though in all likelihood this was the present play, we must remember that there was an older drama, *The Historie of Error*, played as early as 1st January 1577. The reference in the third act (III. ii. 125-127), which constitutes the external evidence—" *Ant. S.:* Where France? *Drom. S.:* In her forehead; armed and revealed, making war against her heir "—refers without doubt to the civil war which took place in France from 1589 to 1593, in which Elizabeth took part by sending an expedition in 1591 to assist Henry IV. to obtain recognition as the successor of Henry III.

Internal evidence as to a very early date for the play is furnished by the frequent occurrence of rhyme. Out of a total length of 1770 lines, 240 lines are in prose, 1150 lines in blank verse, while rhyme enters as an element into the play to the extent of 19.4 per cent. Feminine endings, curiously enough, register 16.6 per cent. There are no light endings, though three occurred in *Love's Labour's Lost*, and end-stopped lines predominate by a large majority, enjambed lines only totalling 12.9 per cent., while the presence of speech endings that are not verse endings fall below one per cent. Classical allusions, puns, conceits, wire-drawn wit, and far-fetched imagery—all these qualities being characteristics of the early plays—abound in every scene. Of doggerel lines there are 109 lines in

the piece. As regards the duration of the action, the time-analysis gives a single day from dawn to dark as the space required for the drama.

The sources whence Shakespeare drew the materials for the plot were the *Menæchmi* of Plautus, while one scene was probably taken from the *Amphitruo* of the same author. Plautus was not translated into English by William Warner until 1595. Shakespeare, however, was intimate with Drayton, and as Drayton was Warner's friend, there is no improbability in the supposition of our dramatist having read the manuscript copy of the translation. Besides, he may have read the play in Latin, for, as Professor Herford justly contends,[1] it is no violent hypothesis to suggest that the sometime scholar of Stratford Grammar School could and did read both the *Menæchmi* and the *Amphitruo* in the original.

The play, in its construction, exhibits a careful attention to the classic unities. The action is embraced within the limits of a single day, the explanation of the "errors" taking place towards the fall of eventide. At the same time, there are many romantic elements intruded into the severity of the classic construction. There is an incipient love romance indicated as pending between Luciana and Antipholus of Syracuse, while the pathos which is present in Ægeon's narrative of his misfortunes (I. i. 1-159), and at his reunion with his wife and sons (V. i. 306 ff.), is such as could only fittingly find a place in a tragi-comedy "of moving accidents by flood and field," as that whereof the drama of Greece and Rome took no account. In duplicating the twins Antipholi by the twins Dromios, Shakespeare, in place of laughing the extravagance out of court, rendered it more probable. For if one mother had two sons of such remarkable similarity of feature, the miracle was rendered little less incredible by tacking on another

[1] Eversley Shakespeare, *Comedy of Errors*.

couple to the original pair. The introduction of twin servants as well as twin masters is due to Shakespeare, who rightly saw, on this as well as on later occasions, that two improbabilities buttress each other, and have a greater plausibility than one.

The plot may be stated in a few words. Ægeon and Emilia, with their twin sons and twin serving-boys (the children being still in extreme infancy), on a voyage from Epidamnum to Syracuse, were wrecked, and separate parts of the vessel carried off from one another, husband and wife, each with one of the twin sons and one of the serving-boys. Mischance separates these individuals themselves in turn, until Ægeon, reft of all his portion of the family, is left a lonely merchant of Syracuse, while Emilia, deprived likewise of hers, becomes abbess of a nunnery. Fortune at length brings them all to Ephesus. Ægeon, who has travelled to seek his sons, has been discovered at Ephesus, and by reason of a quarrel between the cities, is bound by the law of Ephesus to die unless he can pay a ransom of 1000 marks. When brought before the Duke he tells the strange story of his misfortunes. Fain would the Duke set him free, but like all Shakespeare's responsible rulers, he refuses to twist the law even to serve the cause of pity. He, however, grants a respite of a day for the merchant to try to raise the sum. Strangely enough, unknown to him and unknown to each other, all the scattered members of his long and widely separated family had, at that precise moment, been gathered together for a day or two in this city of Ephesus. Amidst much that is jejune and immature, there are strokes of consummate art in the play, as, for instance, the skilful way in which the excitement is worked up regarding the chance whether or no the paths of Ægeon and his children will cross ere the respite expire. The remarkable likeness between the Antipholi and the Dromios leads to all sorts of absurd mistakes and complications. With

great dexterity Shakespeare always contrives that the two pairs of twins shall just miss meeting one another by the fraction of a second, when of course the "errors" would have been at once explained. Eventually, as Ægeon is being led to execution, the sudden explanation comes, after a pathetic scene in which he mistakes Antipholus of Ephesus for him of Syracuse, and is staggered to be repulsed by one he believes to be his son. The story is so unique that the Duke pardons the Syracusan merchant, and all is well.

The characters befit the piece. They are, in most cases, mere outlines, without individual attributes. The two Antipholi and the two Dromios are just the obverse and the reverse of the same coin. There is, however, a reason for that vagueness in filling in the characteristics of the *dramatis personæ*. Already his experience in play-adaptation had taught him this truth, that in a farcical drama, elaborateness of detail in the characters meant reduced interest in the incidents of the piece. This very fact showed Shakespeare that farce was not his province.

Into the heart of the fun and frolic of the "errors" Shakespeare has introduced a suggestion of domestic tragedy, and also of an incipient love romance.[2] To the Abbess's question, Adriana, the wife of Antipholus of Ephesus, said—

> "This week he hath been heavy, sour, sad,
> And much different from the man he was"—

a mood which she ascribes to "some love that drew him oft from home," for which she had frequently reprehended him. The truth is, the lady, despite her beauty, was gifted with a jealous nature and an acidulous tongue, which threatened to wreck the matrimonial happiness of the pair. Fortunately, the troubles she passes through at this juncture bid fair

[1] *Lectures on Shakespeare*, by H. N. Hudson, vol. i. p. 216.
[2] Swinburne, *Study of Shakespeare*, pp. 46-47.

to teach Adriana the baselessness of her suspicions, and doubtless in the future she will trust her husband, even when she cannot trace his comings and goings.

Shakespeare's art, even at this early stage, is immensely superior to that of Plautus. The *Menæchmi* of the latter is but a farce and nothing more. In the *Comedy of Errors*, however, mingled with all the headlong frolic and fooling, there are those suggestions of tragic pathos, dependent upon the accidental "might-have-beens" of life, that lift the piece into a higher atmosphere than that of mere farce. Nevertheless the thread of the story is spun so fine, that it can scarcely bear all that is dependent on it in the way of characters and action.

A slight distinction may be traced between Dromio of Ephesus and Dromio of Syracuse. The former deals more in quips and cranks of wit; the latter has a Launce-like humour, which, though sometimes a little broad, yet delights without disgusting.

The two women, Adriana and Luciana, are entirely different from each other. The former, despite all the sweetness of her nature, degrades her womanhood by suspicion. We have no reason to believe that Antipholus of Ephesus had ever been guilty of infidelity to his wife, notwithstanding the fact that he dined at the courtesan's house. Shakespeare, doubtless, knew what the "hetairae" of ancient Greece had been, and how Aspasia, Lais, Phryne, Rhodope, and others of that epoch were the friends of many of the statesmen of the time without any suspicion of immorality attaching to their intercourse. This was the relation he desired to indicate as existing between the courtesan and Antipholus. Though Adriana had no knowledge of this friendship, she suspected her husband of a guilty love, and thereby lowered the standard of her womanly influence over him, by reprehending him for that of which he knew himself to be innocent. Adriana compares the liberty granted to men with the restraint put

upon women, and draws inferences therefrom regarding her husband, which add fuel to her anger.

Luciana is altogether a nobler character, gentle and yielding, where it is her part so to be, but, when occasion demands, staunch in her gracious insistence upon all holy virtuous principle. To her nature, Adriana's angry querulousness is altogether foreign. By the sceptre of supreme love she would rule, but she would also yield obedience to the other sceptre of marital superiority, as when she says, to soothe her sister's irritation—"A man is master of his liberty." "Men are masters to their females, and their lords." "Ere I learn love, I'll practise to obey."

The two sisters are excellent foils the one to the other, the qualities of each throwing those of the other into bolder relief.

The remaining characters worthy of mention are Ægeon and Emilia. The figure of the poor old Syracusan merchant, condemned to die for the innocent fault of putting into the port of Ephesus in search of his wife and children, is one of pathos yet of dignity. Life has now but few delights in store for him, and he does not shrink from the fate impending. With a calm composure, born of the consciousness that for him the great interests of social intercourse and of personal enjoyment lie in the past, he faces death, only to discover, on the brink of the grave, those hostages to fortune he had lost so long before. Emilia is a more shadowy character. As the Abbess she appears rather too positive and peremptory to be pleasant, but her last speech, in giving the general invitation to all the company to go with her and her newly recovered husband and children into the abbey to hear her story, savours of the milk of human kindness. Possibly, like Adriana, she had learned her lesson, that he or she "prayeth best who loveth best," and that love is the almighty leavener of life.

Angelo and the merchants are mere shadows without

individuality, while Pinch, the schoolmaster and quack doctor, is too farcical to be human, besides being a deplorable anachronism. In these minor characters Shakespeare showed that his hand had not yet acquired that freedom of outline-drawing and sureness of touch in portraiture, which afterwards were his so pre-eminently.

SECTION 6.—ROMEO AND JULIET. 1591-5

The next drama in the First Period is *Romeo and Juliet*, originally written late in 1591 or early in 1592, and then rewritten in 1595. The First Quarto states that the work "had been played many times with great applause before 1597." That is one clue. Another is the remark made by the old Nurse, who says (I. iii. 23), "I remember it well: 'tis since the earthquake now eleven years," that Juliet was weaned. The earthquake was probably the one occurring in England, 6th April 1580. Eleven years added to that date would give us 1591, the year when we suppose the first rough draft of the play to have been written. Revised editions were issued, some writers think, in 1595, others in 1597 or 1599. We have Quartos (Q2 and Q3) bearing these two latter dates, while a third edition appeared in 1609.

In all likelihood the first (1591) draft was the earliest form of the play; that of 1595 (otherwise the First Quarto) [Q1] was perhaps a pirated edition of Shakespeare's first revised version for the stage—a version probably made up of the first draft, *plus* scenes taken down in shorthand, and eked out by passages from memory. The draft of 1599 (or the Second Quarto) [Q2] was the final stage-draft of the play, as far as Shakespeare was concerned. Any editions thereafter were but facsimiles of the Second Quarto.

That the play dates from as early as 1591 is testified to by several items of evidence cumulatively forming a strong chain. In addition to the old Nurse's reference to the earthquake, some weight must be attached to the argument from the similarities existing between Samuel Daniel's description in the *Complaint of Rosamond* of the change death has wrought in her "whom men call fair, if what I was I be," and the depicting of a like state of things in the superb death-hymn addressed by Romeo to Juliet. As, however, there is doubt which was prior in date, Shakespeare might conceivably have borrowed from Daniel. Too much stress, therefore, must not be laid on this matter. The same may be said of the similarities traceable between this play and that of *Wily Beguiled* (1597), and of *The Wisdom of Dr. Dodipoll* (1600). We also find traces of resemblances to Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*, to Lyly's *Sapho and Phao*, to Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*, and to Spenser's *Shepheards Calendar*, in some of which Shakespeare obviously was the borrower.[1]

The play was entered on the registers of Stationers' Hall on 5th August 1596, and seems from the outset to have been popular. That there were other and earlier treatments of the story is more than probable, but they all appear to have dropped into obscurity before the transcendant merits and popularity of Shakespeare's great tragedy.

The action of the play lies wholly in Verona, save for the scene in Mantua, whither Romeo flees. The time-analysis gives the duration of the action as follows—

Day	I. Sunday,	embracing Act	I.;	II. Sc. i.-ii.
,,	II. Monday,	,,	,, II.	Sc. iii.-vi.; III. i.-iv.
,,	III. Tuesday,	,,	,, III.	,, v.; IV. i.-iii.
,,	IV. Wednesday,	,,	,, IV.	,, iv.-v.
,,	V. Thursday,	,,	,, V.	,, i.-ii.-iii.
,,	VI. Friday,	,,	,, V.	,, iii. (conclusion)

[1] St. Marc Girardin, *Cours de Littérature Dramatique*, vol. i. pp. 101-109.

The evidence furnished by the metrical tests towards the settlement of date is as follows: Out of the total number of lines in the play, 3002, there are 405 lines in prose and 2111 in blank verse; of rhyming pentameter, or five-measure lines, there are 486, while of other rhymes the percentage is 17.2. Of feminine or double endings the percentage is 8.2, while of light endings and weak endings there are 6 of the former and 1 of the latter registered. Of run-on, or enjambed lines (though the majority of the lines in the play are still end-stopped), the percentage has risen to 14.2, while the speech-ending test gives us a percentage of 14.9. The classical allusions, the puns and conceits, the wire-drawn wit and the far-fetched imagery, all continue to be in evidence, but are growing less frequent. The cumulative verdict of the metrical tests places *Romeo and Juliet* sixth on the list of the First Period plays.

The sources whence the materials for the play were drawn had been for some time before English readers. By the Neapolitan novelist, Massuccio di Salerno, the story had been told as early as 1476, the hero and heroine in that story being Mariotto Mignanelli and Gianozza Saraceni of Siena. About 1530, another Italian writer, Luigi da Porto, recast the tale, the names Romeo and Guilietta being now for the first time introduced, while the rivalry of the old Veronese families of Montecchi and Capelletti was made the reason why no love-suit on Romeo Montecchi's part would ever be entertained by the house of Guilietta Capelletti.[1] In this story, after Romeo has drunk the poison, Juliet comes out of her trance and the lovers have a last embrace and passionate interchange of vows ere death seals his lips and she herself dies of a broken heart over her separation from him. Five-and-twenty years later, Bandello, in his *Novelle*, re-

[1] Albert Lacroix, *Histoire de l'Influence de Shakespeare sur le Théâtre Français*, p. 338.

issued the tale with one or two new features, such as the fact of Romeo's prior love for Rosaline, while the County Paris is introduced as the rival of the hero in Guilietta's love. This is the first version, moreover, where Guilietta employs the old Nurse as the "go-between" to carry messages to her lover.[1]

Such were the Italian sources. Shakespeare was not wholly dependent on them, though evidence exists that he carefully consulted them all. Pierre Boaistuau had, in 1559, published a French translation of Bandello's romance, in which he introduced the tragic close adopted by the great dramatist himself, viz., that Romeo dies before Guilietta recovers from the trance, and she, on learning what has occurred, puts an end to her existence by means of Romeo's dagger.

English readers had not a prose translation of the Italian versions until in 1562 Arthur Brooke made a metrical translation from the French of Boaistuau's version, under the title of *Romeus and Juliet;* while in his famous collection of prose novels, entitled *The Palace of Pleasure,* William Painter in 1567 also included the story. To Brooke, however, Shakespeare owed by far the greater part of his material. By him the Nurse had been raised from a subordinate into a prominent character. Brooke, moreover, deepened the tragic interest of Romeo's character, by causing him to bewail, in Friar Laurence's cell, that hastiness of temper which had led him into conflict with Tybalt; also that mysterious destiny which, opening up before him, seemed on the eve of involving so many innocent lives in his own dark fate. All these elements of the plot, gradually added to it, as it successively passed through the hands of Massuccio, Da Porto, Bandello, Boaistuau, Brooke, and Painter, were caught up in the giant grasp of Shakespeare's genius, and moulded into a series of creations so life-like in their conception and

[1] Dr. H. T. Rötscher, *Philosophie de Kunst,* vol. iv. *Romeo and Juliet* analysed.

execution, that we never think of regarding them as the stuff that dreams are made on, but speak of them as men and women who lived and loved, in those dim days of headlong Italian passion, when the soul of a girl became sentient with womanhood's passionate possibilities almost before she passed the barrier of the teens, and when a youth became a squire of dames well-nigh almost as soon as breeched.

The plot may thus be detailed. In Verona lived two mighty families, equal in wealth and station, whose rivalries had long disturbed the peace of the city, the Montagues and the Capulets.[1] Of the generation at the date of the play, one son, Romeo, was left to the Montagues, one daughter, Juliet, to the Capulets.

With a young lady of Verona named Rosaline, Romeo had fallen in love. So completely was he under the dominion of his passion, that to him the daily bickerings and street frays of Montague with Capulet were entirely distasteful. For Rosaline's sake, with her bright black eyes, high forehead, scarlet lip, and fine foot, a girl, moreover, of cool, unemotional temperament, and, in addition, a niece of "old Capulet's," Romeo would fain barter all the world beside. Though he realises how hopeless his love is, still, like moth to the candle, when the Capulets give a feast to their friends, and a blundering serving-man, ignorant of his identity, invites him "to come and crush a cup of wine," Romeo goes to the feast, where the fair Rosaline sups with all the admired beauties of Verona—goes to see if any face can compare with hers in beauty. Benvolio undertakes that if he will

> —"with unattainted eye,
> Compare her face with some that I shall show,
> *Then* I will make thee think thy swan a crow."

To which Romeo scornfully agrees, retorting—

> "I'll go along, no such sight to be shown,
> But to rejoice in splendour of mine own."

[1] *Cf.* Belleforest's *Histoires Tragiques.*

They accordingly go as "maskers," and are welcomed by "old Capulet," with Juliet and others of his house. Hither Romeo hath scarcely come, when in a sort of blank amazement, he stammers out the question to one of the serving-men, "What lady is that which doth enrich the hand of yonder knight?" and on the man being unable to satisfy his curiosity, he goes on to say—

> "O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!
> Did my heart love till now? forswear it, sight!
> For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night."

His soliloquy is overheard by Tybalt, who would fain have picked a quarrel with him, but Capulet forbids him to insult any man, even an enemy, in his house, and Tybalt, nursing rage in his heart, is compelled to desist from his purpose for the time being. At last Juliet and Romeo meet, and prove the truth of Marlowe's dictum as interpreted by Shakespeare—

> "Dead Shepherd! now I find thy saw of might
> Who ever loved that loved not at first sight?"

They came together, they saw, and they mutually conquered one another. They salute with an innocent kiss, but almost immediately start apart in horror to find they are hereditary enemies, and by every code of Veronese ethics should hate each other with a quenchless hatred. Of life, however, Love is the supreme lord, to whom even hereditary hate, with all its brood of ancient envies and animosities, must give way.

Romeo, when the feast is over, slips into the garden of the Capulets, and standing love-entranced beneath Juliet's window, overhears, amid the silence and the sweets of the still Italian night, her maiden soliloquy in which she confesses to herself that she loves him. Then succeeds that superb balcony scene, unrivalled in the love literature of the world for passionate *abandon*, though checked ever and anon by subtle

qualms of maidenly modesty. Now that she realises that her heart is no longer in her own keeping, Juliet surrenders all the rest with the imperial generosity of true love. To the mysteries of life, death, and futurity, love to her is now the only key, and she calls on it to open the treasure-house of her being, that the lord of her whole nature may enter into the possession of his kingdom.

Having confessed her love, to Juliet, now, her lover is the universe of all lawful desire. Her world of will is now bounded by his preferences. She has no longer any feminine reticences or reluctances. Yet at this supreme moment and amidst its tremulous excitement, she remembers that she and her lover stand between the terrible alternatives of never meeting again or of belonging to each other from that hour absolutely and entirely. She therefore—the innocent girl scarce into her teens, though blushing with virginal modesty over the deed — proposes immediate marriage to her lover, being ready to go to the earth's end with him, or to stay in Verona, as he may elect. Maidenly shame and shrinking struggle in her soul with love and devotion. The wish to believe alternates with the dread lest Romeo should trifle with her weakness. She gives and withdraws, speaks and retracts, wishes to manifest her love yet not to appear forward, declines his oaths, yet bears in mind the falseness of men; delights in her happiness and sweet repose, yet has no joy in this contract to-night but rather a foreboding care—all these features alternate in wonderful succession in that brief hour, displaying a fathomless depth of affection and a rich sympathetic susceptibility—

> "My bounty is as boundless as the sea;
> My love as deep; the more I give to thee,
> The more I have, for both are infinite."

This is the climax. From this point the tragedy moves swiftly to its catastrophe. Juliet makes the

decision as to marrying Romeo, which is to be so momentous for both—

> "If that thy bent of love be honourable,
> Thy purpose marriage, send me word to-morrow,
> By one that I'll procure to come to thee,
> Where, and what time, thou wilt perform the rite;
> And all my fortunes at thy foot I'll lay,
> And follow thee my lord throughout the world."

Upon this scene and the next, Rötscher, the great German critic, says: "What a world has come into being in Juliet's soul between her first meeting with Romeo and her appearance at the beginning of the second act! The whole spring of her inner life has in the interval ripened. The closed bud has been penetrated by the full beam of love, and lifts itself up in full splendour to the sun. . . . The naïve, childlike, unrestrained tone of the first scene, which gives no sign of slumbering power and passion, has yielded to the tone which now tells us of a new emotion swelling into life. In this tone the hearer has a presentiment of that inner force of the soul which has taken possession of the whole being for life."

The Nurse was accordingly sent as "go-between" to make the arrangements, returning anon to tell Juliet that if she had got leave to go to shrift that day, then to hie her to Father Laurence's cell, where a husband waited to make her a wife. Needless to say the maiden kept tryst, and the good friar, by bonds of holy Church, "made of these twain, one flesh." Scarce had this been done when in one of the recurring brawls between Montagues and Capulets, whereby the streets of Verona were rendered dangerous to peaceful wayfarers, Mercutio was slain by Tybalt, Juliet's cousin, and Tybalt by Romeo. The news ere long reaches her of the tragedy, with this other item of intelligence, that Romeo had been banished by the Prince for life.

To Juliet such a report came like a bolt from the blue. Her new-born happiness literally withered

from the root. Nor was this all. The County Paris, who had long been one of Juliet's admirers, and had evidently made a formal offer for her hand before the death of Tybalt, now presses for an immediate reply. Old Capulet, who was delighted to have the chance of such a son-in-law, declaring that his daughter was then overwhelmed with grief, but that he was certain she would be guided by his judgment in the matter, accepts the offer on her behalf, and bluntly fixes the wedding four days ahead, charging his wife to break the news to Juliet.

The latter is appalled. In vain she tries to induce her parents to decline the match. Old Capulet, despite his fondness for her, loses his temper, and descends to the grossest abuse of the "chop-logic"—the mistress minion—the green-sickness carrion—the baggage—the tallow-face—the disobedient wretch—the wretched, puling fool—the whining mammet—who dared to cross his will. Her mother crushes her by contemptuous silence; the Nurse, her sole friend, actually suggests that she is in luck to have a second husband when the first was as good as dead. Juliet, with a bitter aside against the Nurse's traitorous desertion, steels herself to bear all her anguish alone, save for the support of her friend, Friar Laurence, to whom she instinctively turns.

We have, however, run ahead of the story to reveal the dilemma whereinto Juliet had fallen. The luckless Romeo, when he realised what he had done in slaying Tybalt, the cousin of his wife, turning, so to speak, upon himself with the sardonic self-gibe, "O, I am fortune's fool," rushes off to Friar Laurence's cell, where he lies crushed and unmanned by grief, literally "with his own tears made drunk." Thither comes the Nurse, who is still his friend—the proposal of the County Paris not having yet been made—bringing a ring from Juliet and a message that lit the lamp of good cheer in Romeo's forlorn heart. He, therefore,

went to her with all the eager joy of bridegroom to his bride. Over the bliss of that meeting, the holy sacrament of marriage, Shakespeare drops the veil of his supreme art. The holy of holies of pure conjugal affection must be profaned by no prying eye and intruding foot.[1]

What a subtle union and intermingling of heart with heart that meeting was, we may divine by the agony of the parting at dawn. The lyric transport of the speeches is impressive in the mutual self-abnegation expressed by both the lovers. Enough for them to live and love and die for one another, if such the fates will.[2] Romeo, however, is at length persuaded to leave his wife and to set out to Mantua. He had scarcely left his wife's chamber, before Lady Capulet was knocking for admittance, to inform her daughter of her pending marriage.

After Capulet and his lady had told Juliet their intentions regarding her future, scouting as puerile folly her entreaties to be allowed to remain as she then was, she betook herself to the friar's cell, in the last extremity of despair. There she met the County Paris, who with tender solicitude chid the excessive grief that stained her loveliness with tears. On his retirement she declared to the friar her intention of killing herself to preserve her fidelity to Romeo. The confessor, however, suggested a better plan, provided she had the courage to carry it out, viz., a potion which would produce for forty-eight hours an effect resembling death. That would leave time for her to be buried in the mausoleum of the Capulets—time for the friar to communicate with Romeo, detailing the plan, and for the latter and Father Laurence to repair to the tomb and await her awakening, when she would start for Mantua with her husband. Gladly

[1] *Cf.* H. N. Hudson, *Lectures on Shakespeare*, lecture x.

[2] Franz Horn, *Shakespeare's Schauspiele*, vol. i. p. 223-225; Tieck, *Dramaturgische Blätter*, vol. i. p. 256.

did the poor girl consent. Any straw of salvation was preferable to marriage with the County Paris.[1]

The best laid schemes, alas! too often fail of fruition through a minor factor not acting in accordance with expectation. At first all went well. The potion worked to perfection. Juliet was laid to rest in the mausoleum amid the sorrow of all Verona. Balthazar, Romeo's servant, before he could be stopped by the friar, posted off to Mantua with the news of Juliet's sudden death. Romeo, hearing nothing from Father Laurence according to promise, surmised the worst, and made his preparations for death. Father Laurence was not to blame.[2] He had despatched without delay, letters to Romeo by Friar John; but the latter was detained in Verona as one suspected of the plague, and Romeo, having purchased a deadly poison from an apothecary, rode post for Verona, and without going elsewhere repaired to the burial vault that he may see Juliet once more. Scarcely had he reached the "monument" when he was accosted by the County Paris, who, ignorant of his relation to Juliet, supposed that he came to wreak his hatred on the dead. Paris himself, accompanied by his page, had come to strew flowers over Juliet's body. The two young men, despite Romeo's disinclination to fight, were soon engaged in deadly combat, for Paris would listen to no explanation. A few passes and "the County" was killed, beseeching his antagonist with his last breath to bury him with Juliet. That request Romeo granted, and having laid Paris in the tomb, he himself drank the poison he had brought and fell dead by her side.[3]

Just then Friar Laurence entered the tomb to be with Juliet when she awoke, and to convey her to his

[1] Kreyssig, *Vorlesungen über Shakespeare*, vol. ii. p. 186-189.
[2] Sträter, *Die Komposition von Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet,"* p. 104.
[3] *Cf.* Rümelin, *Shakespearestudien*, p. 66.

cell until Romeo should arrive. He was surprised to see lights, but surprise deepened into horror when he discovered Paris and Romeo newly dead. To complete the tragic character of the scene, Juliet awoke from her trance, only to find her lover a corpse. The friar tried to induce her to leave the vault with him. Steps and voices meantime were heard approaching. The friar disappeared from the tomb, and Juliet stabbed herself so as not to be separated from her lover. The watch, summoned by County Paris's page, then entered and made the woeful discovery of the threefold tragedy. Presently, after Balthazar and Friar Laurence had been arrested, and the Prince, as well as the Montagues and Capulets summoned, the whole sad mystery was unravelled. Truly then was it made evident that never had there been

> —"a story of more woe
> Than this of Juliet and her Romeo."

The principal characters of the drama are almost without exception drawn with vigour, careful appreciation of the differentiating individual qualities, and a keen sense of the mutual influence likely to be exercised by each on the other as the action of the play develops. Prince Escalus, the ruler of Verona, is a quiet, easy-going man, quite unfit either to curb or to calm the turbulent party forces that are at work in the high places of his realm. He prefers ease to order, and while promulgating excellent statutes against brawling, does not carry the penalty promptly into effect when the offence is repeated. Plainly when Mercutio and Tybalt were slain, the heads of the rival houses should have been punished. Escalus mouths out—

> "I will be deaf to pleading and excuses; . . .
> Mercy but murders, pardoning those that kill."

In place of inflicting punishment on the heads of the rival houses, however, Romeo, who merely turned

back to avenge his friend and the Prince's kinsman, is alone made the scapegoat. That Escalus realised his remissness in this respect is evident from his words as the play closes—

> " And I, for winking at your discords too,
> Have lost a brace of kinsmen:—all are punished."

The young men of the piece, the County Paris, Mercutio, Benvolio, Tybalt, etc., are all more or less splendid swashbucklers, brave to rashness, gay and unmoved in the face of danger—men, in fact, to whom a street fray, in which they might run the chance to slay or get slain, was, in Slender's phrase, " meat and drink to them." Like their lineal descendants, 250 years later, Athos, Porthos, and Aramis, the glorious " Three Musketeers," they considered an insult could only be washed out by blood, while to remain staunch to a friend through all vicissitudes of fortune or the field, was the prime article in their code of honour.[1] If Death tapped them on the shoulder when they least expected, they met him as did Mercutio on receiving his death wound, with a jest and a gibe, " Ask for me to-morrow, and you will find me a grave man." From such dauntless stuff the Italian *condottieri*, or " soldiers of fortune," of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were drawn.

The serving-men, Sampson, Gregory, Abraham, Balthazar, and the others, were imbued with the same spirit, though the fact is worthy of note that they would only admit they bit their thumbs at their rivals, when they saw the odds were in their favour. Tybalt and Mercutio would have faced all odds. Montague and Capulet seem to have been in age what their juniors were in youth. The will was present to fight, but the strength absent, so that they could grin and shake their heads at each other when they met and call for swords, when, as Lady Capulet said,

[1] Mezières, *Shakespeare, Ses Œuvres et Ses Critiques*, p. 264 ff.

a crutch would be more to the purpose. Of the two, Capulet is more in evidence. Towards his daughter he shows himself a coarse-minded, vulgar, abusive despot, who, unless he always gets his own way, reveals a spirit of domineering tyranny in his household relations, indicative of a shallow nature. From anger to satisfaction he passes immediately when Juliet signifies her willingness to wed the County Paris. When, however, the supposed death of his daughter is announced, he totters forward to gaze upon her, muttering, "Out, out, alas, she's cold, her blood is settled, and her joints are stiff." He finds that words fail to express the magnitude of his loss, and he gasps out the almost inarticulate wail, "Death . . . ties up my tongue and will not let me speak." Stunned by the blow, the fountain of his activities seems dried at its source, and to him the light of life is everlastingly dimmed when his family is extinct.

Montague is by nature cast in a milder mould. When his son was suffering from the disdain of Rosaline, he longed to learn the cause of his melancholy in order to sympathise with him, and he urged Benvolio to discover the reason. Lady Capulet is one of those cold, unemotional women to whom family pride and social pomp constitute the better half of their nature. Though Juliet's heart might break over her marriage with the County, better that than losing the chance of such an alliance.

We come now to consider the three major characters in the play—Romeo, Juliet, and the Nurse. Of these in their inverse order. The Nurse is one of Shakespeare's great creations. Like Falstaff, she is not only humorous herself, but a cause of humour in others. Absolutely devoted to the house of Capulet, she is ready to do and to dare all for its welfare. Juliet is the apple of her eye. From infancy the child has been her companion. Far more than her own mother, the Nurse has shown herself to Juliet as her parent,

and Juliet turns to her in every time of need. She is virtually a member of the family, and is (as Gervinus says) "the real mistress of the house. She manages the mother, she assists the daughter, and fears not to cross the old man in his most violent anger." [1] She is a strange compound of virtues and vices, foolishly talkative, immodest alike in speech and imagination, with a mind that savours of the earth, earthy. She considers the "main chance" as being in life the one thing that counts. To be married to a noble and wealthy husband, albeit a Montague, was to her the *ne plus ultra* of feminine ambition. Hence her readiness to promote the marriage between her young mistress and Romeo. When, however, after his slaughter of Tybalt, Romeo was banished from Verona, and became in a conjugal sense "a dead man," the Nurse became just as keen to promote the match with the County Paris, and even hinted obscurely that Romeo could be got "out of the way." The late H. A. Taine thus analyses her character: "Stupid, impudent, immoral, yet otherwise a worthy soul, and indulgent to her young charge. She sets out to tell a long-winded improper anecdote, and begins it four times over. It is all the same whether she is stopped in it or not. . . . Common people never follow a direct line of reasoning or of narration. They retrace their steps, beat around the same bush. They advance only by meandering in and out among a hundred incidents, before they reach the essential word. Thus is it with the Nurse, when she brings news of Romeo to Juliet, whom she tortures not for the sake of teasing her, but only through her rambling incoherence." [2] When, however, she praises Paris, and suggests that Romeo should be forgotten, Juliet turns away from "the ancient damnation" for ever. At that moment her girlhood dies within her and her womanhood is

[1] Gervinus, *Commentaries on Shakespeare*, p. 220.
[2] Taine, *Littérature Anglaise*, p. 190

born. Her foster-mother has failed her; henceforward she must lean upon herself.

And now of "Juliet and her Romeo." What can we say of them? Just this, that of all star-crossed lovers their fate is the saddest. So little there lacked of time and chance to have saved them, that one involuntarily cries, "Why was he so persistently headstrong?" forgetting that he and she are but the stuff that dreams are made on, for it is Shakespeare's crowning glory that so lifelike is his art that we believe the tragedy to record an historical event.[1] Nor is it wholly unhistorical, as Philarète Chasles points out in *Etudes sur Shakespeare:* "In a deserted street of deserted Verona stands, half-hidden, an old smoke-stained hostelry, where there is shouting and swearing and smoking, where maccaroni and sour wine are dealt out to labourers. It was once the palace of the Capulets. The little hat sculptured about the doorway is the escutcheon of the Capulets—the Capelletto. Here Juliet lived, and at the end of a courtyard there is an ancient tomb, the burial-place, they tell you, of Romeo and Juliet."[2]

The tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet* is the tragedy of love, as *Othello* is the tragedy of jealousy, *Macbeth* of ambition, and *Lear* of self-will, and the unwarranted abnegation of responsibility. Romeo is the representative of that type of mind which is of emotion and sensuous feeling all compact. To him the chief end of life was to love. As compared with the union of hearts in mutual affection, all else in the world was accounted by him as dross. Of Romeo's nature Juliet's was the counterpart. In her estimation, the highest glory of woman was to be the companion of man. Her duty as she conceived it, lay in giving Romeo not only her heart but herself. She therefore no longer belonged to herself but to him, and this

[1] Lessing, *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, art. xv.
[2] Philarète Chasles, *Etudes sur Shakespeare*, p. 141. Paris, 1851.

endued her with courage to face all risks and dangers so as to prove herself a true wife to the husband of her heart. To either of these lovers, life without the other was impossible. Romeo preferred to take the last leap from life into death when he believed that Juliet had preceded him into the Unseen and Unknown; she in her turn, when she discovered how fatally their scheme had miscarried, hastened after him into "the dusky halls of death," because she realised that life without him would be unbearable. Gently she chides that he had not left her some of the poison: "O churl! drink all; and leave no friendly drop, to help me after?" Then his dagger catches her eye. She snatches it up, and driving it home to her heart, falls on her husband's bosom, faithful in and unto death.[1]

Upon the tragedy Hazlitt[2] says: "Romeo is Hamlet in love. There is the same exuberance of passion and sentiment in the one that there is of thought and sentiment in the other. Both are absent and self-involved; both live out of themselves in a world of imagination. Hamlet is abstracted from everything; Romeo is abstracted from everything but his love, and lost in it." Of Juliet he says: "The character is one of perfect truth and sweetness, with nothing forward, nothing coy, nothing affected or coquettish about it. It is a pure effusion of nature. It is as frank as it is modest, for it has no thought that it wishes to conceal. It reposes in conscious innocence on the strength of its affection. Its delicacy does not consist in coldness and reserve, but in combining warmth of imagination and tenderness of heart with the most voluptuous sensibility." Franz Horn says: "Juliet knows nothing of prudery or coquetry. She is not ashamed of her love: were she ashamed of it she would be less virtuous. She says

[1] Mrs. Jameson's *Shakespeare's Heroines*—"Juliet."
[2] Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays.*

without embarrassment and with perfect frankness, 'If that thy bent of love be honourable, thy purpose marriage,' etc. And as she recognises the purity of Romeo's love, be it ever so quickly (spiritual insight is always quick), she is instantly decided." Schlegel, speaking of the play as a whole, remarks: "It was reserved for Shakespeare to unite purity of heart and the glow of imagination, sweetness, dignity of manners, and passionate violence, in one ideal picture."[1]

SECTION 7.—RICHARD III. 1593

The historical play of *Richard III.* completes the story of the "Wars of the Roses." Of the action of the drama, the inception must be looked for in the Third Part of *Henry VI.* (V. vi. 68-93), where, after Gloster has murdered Henry, he maps out for himself the part he was to play in State affairs until in a position to seize the crown.

Another play, therefore, was forecasted in the passage in question, to bring the action down to the Battle of Bosworth in 1485, when the House of York, the cup of its crimes filled to overflowing, was hurled from power by the sheer force of national hatred. Not so much the direct popularity of Richmond, as the intensity of the horror and hatred felt towards Richard, was the factor instrumental in seating the former on the throne of England. Of this element in the case, Shakespeare availed himself with conspicuous skill. No scene in the drama is of greater power than that where Richard begins at last to realise that the Nemesis of his crimes is approaching in the person of Richmond, and that the people of England were impatiently expecting him (IV. iv. 432 ff.) to exact expiation. *Richard III.* is the tragedy of the unscrupulous assumption and exercise of kingly power, the moral being "writ large" in every scene.

[1] *Dramatic Literature*, p. 400.

That Shakespeare began *Richard III.* while still at work on the revision of *Henry VI.*, Part III., is exceedingly probable. This, if true, would give a date early in 1593 as that of the play, and no other quite suits the facts of the case. The influence of Marlowe is undeniably perceptible.[1] In *Richard II.*, however, his next play, written towards the close of the same year, the spell cast over him by the author of *Tamburlane* and the *Jew of Malta* had already begun to wane, Marlowe having been killed in a brawl at Deptford in June 1593, though the Marlowesque influence was still traceable for some years to come.

The materials for the play lay well to hand in Holinshed's *Chronicle*, though allusions can be discovered to Hall's *Chronicle* and Sir Thomas More's *History of Edward V.* and *Richard III.* From a single line in Holinshed, some of the most impressive characters in the drama have been developed.

The story of Richard III. had already attracted the attention of other dramatists in Tudor times. In 1594 there had been printed *The | True Tragedie of Ri | chard the Third | wherein is showne the death of Edward the | foorth, with the smothering of the two | yoong Princes in the Tower : | with a lamentable end of Shore's Wife, an example | for all wicked women | and lastly the conjunction and joyning of the two noble | Houses, Lancaster and Yorke | As it was played by the Queenes Majesties | Players | London. | Printed by Thomas Creede, and are to be sold by | William Barley at his shop in Newgate Market, neare | Christ Church doore,* 1594. | It had been in existence long before the date of publication, had doubtless suggested to Shakespeare some of the incidents and sayings in his plays, and finally, when the latter proved so successful, the earlier drama was revised, re-staged, and finally

[1] *See* reference to *Richard III.* in *Return from Parnassus*, with note, in Temple Dramatists edition, by the present writer.

printed. Such resemblances as the following can scarcely be fortuitous—

The True Tragedie

" Methinks their ghosts come gaping for revenge
Whom I have slain in reaching for a crown."

" A horse! a horse! a fresh horse! "

Richard III.

" Methought the souls of all that I had murdered
Came to my tent, and every one did threat
To-morrow's vengeance on the head of Richard."

" A horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse! "[1]

Shakespeare may also have seen an old Latin play on the theme, entitled *Ricardus Tertius*, by Thomas Legge, first acted at St. John's College, Cambridge, in 1579, and frequently thereafter. John Weaver in 1595 bore indirect testimony to the popularity of the play by addressing one of his " Epigrammes " to " Gulielmus Shakespeare," in which he alludes to " Romeo, Richard, more whose names I know not," as being characters of current stage celebrity.

The scene of the drama is laid in London, until the last act, when it shifts to Salisbury and Bosworth Field. The time-analysis of the play gives the duration of the action as eleven days—

ay	I.	embracing	Act	I.	Sc. i.-ii.; Interval.
,,	II.	,,	,,	I.	,, iii.-iv.; II. i.-ii.
,,	III.	,,	,,	II.	,, iii.
,,	IV.	,,	,,	II.	,, iv.
,,	V.	,,	,,	III.	,, i.
,,	VI.	,,	,,	III.	,, ii.-vii.
,,	VII.	,,	,,	IV.	,, i.
,,	VIII.	,,	,,	IV.	,, ii.-v.; Interval.
,,	IX.	,,	,,	V.	,, i.; Interval.
,,	X.	,,	,,	V.	,, ii., and half of iii.
,,	XI.	,,	,,	V.	,, iii. (2nd half), iv.-v.

The historic period covered by the action dates from

[1] Parodied by Marston in the *Scourge of Villainy*, " A man! a man! a kingdom for a man! "

the obsequies of Henry VI. (23rd May 1471) to the Battle of Bosworth (22nd August 1485).

The evidence from metrical tests regarding this play is remarkable. The total length of the drama is 3599 lines, in which there are only about 55 lines of prose. Now the inclusion of prose is a mark of a later date of composition. Therefore by this one test we would argue an early date. Then as to rhyme as against blank verse, rhyme also being indicative of an early date, we have only 170 rhyming lines as against 3374 in blank verse. From this we would judge that the play was not in Shakespeare's First Period, and that by this time he had realised the value of blank verse as a flexible medium of expression. We now come to feminine or double endings. Of these we have about 570 instances, or a percentage of 19.5, with four light endings, but no weak endings in the piece. Then as to end-stopped lines, we have still a goodly number of these, the run-on lines only amounting in percentage to 13.1. Of doggerel there is very little in the play, but there are still a number of classical allusions, and a few instances of puns, conceits, and wit drawn out to the point of exhaustion. Altogether the evidence of metrical tests supports the external evidence as to date, viz., that the piece is one of the latest plays in the First Period.

The plot is concerned with the machinations of Richard Duke of Gloster to secure the crown, in pursuance of which end he stops at nothing. Men like Clarence and Hastings, who stood in his way, were removed with a cynical disregard of life calculated to daunt the boldest.

At the opening of the drama, he complains that since grim-visaged war had smoothed his wrinkled front and given place to this "weak piping time of peace," his occupation is gone, and his opportunities of advancing his interests entirely cut off. For him now there is naught to do save "to spy his shadow in the

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,,	IV.	,,	,,	II.	,,	iv.
,,	V.	,,	,,	III.	,,	i.
,,	VI.	,,	,,	III.	,,	ii.-vii.
,,	VII.	,,	,,	IV.	,,	i.
,,	VIII.	,,	,,	IV.	,,	ii.-v.; Interval.
,,	IX.	,,	,,	V.	,,	i.; Interval.
,,	X.	,,	,,	V.	,,	ii., and half of iii.
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sun, and descant on his own deformity." He cannot endure it. Therefore—

> "Plots have I laid, inductions dangerous,
> By drunken prophecies, libels, and dreams,
> To set my brother Clarence and the king
> In deadly hate the one against the other."

His scheme was successful. Clarence, who had married the daughter of Warwick, the "Kingmaker," was arrested and executed. The King, at the suggestions of Gloster, was ready to believe any treason and to suspect his best friends. His death, in fact, seemed to be hastened by the uncertainty he felt regarding all his former supporters. On Edward IV.'s death, Richard at once seized the person of his royal nephew, Edward V., and his brother, the young Duke of York. The family and friends of the Queen (who was a daughter of Lord Rivers, and had been before her union with Edward, Dame Elizabeth Grey, the widow of a Lancastrian landowner) were hurried to execution; Richard was appointed "Lord Protector" of the realm, and, as such, impeached Lord Hastings, the favourite minister of his brother, the President of the Council, and the strongest statesman in the kingdom. "I will not dine," cried Richard, "till they have brought me your head;" and Hastings, within ten minutes of his occupying the seat of honour in the Council, was a corpse. Then, with feigned reluctance, Richard accepted the crown, being summoned apparently from his devotions, in which he was engaged, a bishop on either side of him, to receive the request of the Mayor of London to ascend the throne, the whole scene, however, being devised by Buckingham to impress the *bourgeois* mind of London's Chief Magistrate.

The drama almost entirely omits mention of the attempts he made to ingratiate himself with the people of England, by initiating sweeping measures of popular reform, granting pardons, and remitting for-

feitures, passing on almost at once to show the beginning of the end. The disappearance of the two young princes, Edward V. and the Duke of York, left no doubt that they had been murdered by Richard's orders. A strong combination, therefore, was formed against him, consisting of many nobles and gentlemen who had been driven into exile by Richard's tyranny. They threw off their allegiance to him, and declared that Henry, Earl of Richmond, the son of Lady Margaret Beaufort, who was descended from John of Gaunt, and had married Edmund Tudor, was the true heir of the crown, as the last remaining scion of the House of Lancaster. Morton, the exiled Bishop of Ely, by his genius for organisation and statecraft, welded the party together.

Richard, in his last days, showed himself full of resource, but he was fighting a losing struggle. His own conscience was condemning him. The appearance of the ghosts of his victims, Prince Edward, Henry VI., Clarence, Rivers, Vaughan, Grey, Hastings, Edward V. and the Duke of York (the two young princes), his wife, Lady Anne, and Buckingham, were but the admonitions of a guilty conscience. Each night, as he laments, they turned his courage to dread, until the dawn broke and Richard became himself again. In the field he revealed himself a capable as well as a brave warrior. Abandoned ere the battle began, by a division of his forces under Lord Stanley, and as it opened by a second body under the Earl of Northumberland, Richard dashed with a cry of "Treason! Treason!" into the thickest of the fight. In the fury of despair he had already flung the Lancastrian standard to the ground and hewed his way into the very presence of his rival, when he fell overpowered by numbers, and the crown which he had worn, and which was found, as the struggle ended, lying near a hawthorn bush, was placed on the head of the conqueror. The view of the character of

Richard taken by Shakespeare is strictly historical both in conception and in execution.

The play is still one of the favourite acting dramas of to-day, in the stage version of Colley Cibber, and actors of such outstanding genius as Burbage, Garrick, Phelps, Kean, Macready, Barry Sullivan, Booth, Forrest, and Irving, have all attained special eminence in the title rôle. The markedly lyrical character of the drama has contributed in no small degree to this result.

The *dramatis personæ* of the play are Marlowesque alike in their conception and in their relation to each other. Shakespeare was still under the spell of that mighty but spasmodic genius, who in the *Tamburlane*, the *Jew of Malta*, and *Dr. Faustus*, had so impressed the character of his genius on the dramatic time-spirit. Marlowe's method was to create the leading personage in his dramas on a colossal scale of forceful individuality, and to allow the subordinate personages thereafter very much to take care of themselves. For example, his "Barabas" in the *Jew of Malta*, his "Tamburlane," and his "Faustus" completely dwarf the other characters in the dramas named, suggesting the idea of inchoateness and lack of symmetry throughout. Such a method serves only to emphasise the leading rôle to the injury and undervaluing of all the other characters. If we compare even the best of Marlowe's creations with any of those in Shakespeare's Second Period, the differences between the artistic plans of the two writers become apparent. In Marlowe's mode there is no continuity of interest, no reflex influence exercised between incident and character, no steadily progressive evolution of temperament along recognised lines of psychological development. The unfolding of character in Marlowe's art has been compared to studying pictures by flashes of lightning. One trait is so expanded as practically to exclude the consideration of aught else. Hence Marlowe's

heroes are nearly all men of one outstanding mental quality.

In *Richard III.* we have an example of Shakespeare's work during the term of the Marlowesque predominance. Already in *Love's Labour's Lost* we had noted the influence of Lyly and of Euphuism; in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, moreover, there are certain passages which do more than reveal a trace of the pastoral felicity and idyllic suggestiveness of Greene in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, where the witchery of the vivacious maids of "merry Fressingfield" so saliently savours of Flora and the country green. Therefore we have Shakespeare here, still in his 'prentice period, seeking hints from all sources, ere in his "Second" or "Maturing Period" he shows us the beginning of that steady growth of the matchless mind and art towards perfection. Though at this stage in all probability the inferior of Marlowe in sheer power of emotional genius, Shakespeare even now revealed the fact that his intellect was cast in a more comprehensive mould through this indication, that although Richard III. dwarfs all the other characters by the colossal grandeur of his proportions, yet the dramatist does not, like Marlowe, leave the minor personages mere lay figures. Crudely and tentatively, yet clearly, he specifies those temperamental differences which distinguished each character, though the deeper ethical distinctions, which were typical of the characterisation of the Second Period, were as yet lacking.

Though a creation so impressive, Richard III. is nevertheless marred by faults inevitable in early attempts at character analysis, by a youthful tragic artist. Shakespeare errs on the side of making Richard's nature too complex for the part he has to play in the economy of the drama. Richardson says on this point: "Richard has wickedness and diabolical ingenuity enough to have brought a world to ruin

far less a dynasty." On this same question Drake remarks: "The character of Richard III. is the picture of a diabolical incarnation moulding the passions and foibles of mankind with superhuman precision to its own iniquitous purposes, and from a delineation like this, Milton must have caught many of the most striking features of his Satanic portrait."[1] G. C. Verplanck adds another feature when he says: "The Richard of Shakespeare has no communion with his kind; he feels himself at once aloof from others and above them; he is 'himself alone;' and he, therefore, neither partakes in the hatred, nor the love or pity, of 'men like one another.' Accordingly, everything that gives the poetic cast and dramatic life and character—everything which elevates Richard above the cruel, artful, cold-blooded tyrant of the old historians, all that mingles a sort of admiring interest with our abhorrence of him, and invests the deformity of his nature with a terrible majesty, is the poet's own conception."[2]

Shakespeare follows Marlowe in so emphasising the outlines of the principal character in the play that it dwarfs all the others. On this point Charles Cowden Clarke says: "Richard simply dominates the play. There is no room for any one else while he is present. The Richard of our poet is a thorough man of the world, bold, practical, direct, prompt. He is gratuitously as well as politically cruel. Expediency with him is law: it were even his religion, if such a word could be combined with such a being. He will pause at no obstacle to achieve a purpose, and at no result, however revolting, does he ever relent."

With regard to the craft by which he reached his ends, Charles Knight says: "Richard proposed to himself to subject events to his domination not by courage alone or activity, or even by the legitimate

[1] *Shakespeare and his Times*, by N. Drake, vol. ii. p. 373.
[2] G. C. Verplanck, *Shakespeare's Dramas*.

exercise of a commanding intellect, but by the clearest perception of the strength which he must inevitably possess who unites the deepest sagacity to the most thorough unscrupulousness in its exercise, and is an equal master of the weapons of force and of craft. The character of Richard is essentially different from any other character which Shakespeare has drawn. His bloody violence is not that of Macbeth, nor his subtle treachery that of Iago. It is difficult to say whether he derives a greater satisfaction from the success of his crimes, or from the consciousness of the power which attends the working of them." [1]

As to this joy in wickedness which the King has, Professor Dowden remarks: " Richard does not serve two masters. He is not like John a dastardly criminal: he is not like Macbeth joyless and faithless because he has deserted loyalty and honour. He has a fierce joy and he is an intense believer—in the creed of hell. And therefore he is strong. He inverts the moral order of things and tries to live in this inverted system. He does not succeed: he dashes himself to pieces against the laws of the world which he has outraged." [2]

On the intellectual quality in Richard's villainy, Professor R. G. Moulton says: " Richard never turns aside to gloat over the agonies of his victims. It is not so much the details as the grand schemes of villainy, the handling of large combinations of crime, that have an interest for him; he is a strategist in villainy, not a tactician." [3]

Upon the hypocrisy of Richard, Schlegel says: " He entertains at bottom a contempt for all mankind, for he is confident of his ability to deceive them whether as his adversaries or instruments. In hypocrisy he is particularly fond of using religious forms, as if

[1] Charles Knight, *Studies in Shakespeare*, p. 193.
[2] Dowden, *Shakespeare, his Mind and Art*, p. 189.
[3] *Shakespeare as Dramatic Artist*, by Prof. R. G. Moulton, p. 91.

actuated by a desire of profaning in the service of hell the religion whose blessings he had inwardly abjured." [1]

Kreyssig recognises in Richard's colossal wickedness a result of the influence upon him: "Much that was guilty in Richard III. may be pardoned—and with it disappears a part of his greatness in an æsthetic and, of course, not in a moral sense—since we are forced to consider him as the son of his time and his country, and to connect the lot of the mortal individual with that of the immortal people. This historic virile conception renders possible, or at least suggests, a resolution of dissonances, which, in the life of a single individual, could not but jar upon us with insupportable discord." [2]

Ulrici sees in the very success of his heartless wickedness the self-destroying Nemesis which in the end overtook him: "The attainment of the object at which Richard had aimed proves the turning point in his fortunes, for tyranny cannot of course maintain anything, inasmuch as it is essentially destruction and annihilation, and accordingly cannot even maintain its own existence. . . . This process of self-destruction which is represented (in a personal form) in the further development of Richard's character constitutes the further advance of the dramatic action. Richard's energy, his skill in dissembling, his self-control, and his self-confidence, diminish in the same degree as circumstances become louder in their demands on his activity to maintain the sovereignty acquired by bloodshed. This demand he feels to be beyond his power, and for the first time he is conscious of a feeling of weakness and helplessness, which feeling awakens his conscience. But the destroying process of his existence has herein reached a height wherein it can no longer be checked. Richard *is* Richard only *without* a conscience: upon its awakening he is no longer

[1] A. W. Schlegel, *Lectures on Dramatic Art*, p. 435

[2] Kreyssig, *Vorlesungen über Shakespeare*, vol. i. p. 400.

himself—he has perished. The death, which in his pangs of conscience he seeks and finds in the tumult of his victorious enemies, is but the outward and visible sign of his already complete self-destruction." [1]

The other figures in the play that deserve mention are few, so completely are all the remaining *dramatis personæ* overshadowed by Richard. Henry Richmond is noble, kindly, just, and generous, as Hazlitt says, a different personage altogether from the world-weary miser-monarch Henry VII., on whose brows the crown pressed like a load of lead. Shakespeare in this play shows the fulfilment of the splendid prophecy pronounced by Henry VI. shortly before his death (cf. 3 *Henry VI.*, IV. vi. 67) over Henry Richmond as a child, when, calling the boy to him and laying his hand upon his head, he says—

> "Come hither, England's hope. If secret powers
> Suggest but truth to my divining thoughts,
> This pretty lad will prove our country's bliss."

Richmond, as Hudson remarks, "is meant to stand for all which Richard is not, and, as the representative of the House of Lancaster, embodied that straightforward, even-handed justice which had never been dispensed under the guilty House of York, but which the people hoped to find in the rival house." [2]

Of course, as Churton Collins says, the historic Richmond differed materially from the dramatic, yet in depicting the victor at Bosworth a man of noble heart and generous hand, Shakespeare doubtless intended to pay a compliment to the reigning House of Tudor, inasmuch as Henry VII. was the grandfather of the reigning sovereign of the dramatist's day.

Unquestionably one of the most remarkable personages in the play is Queen Margaret, the widow of Henry VI. Her influence broods over the drama

[1] Ulrici, *Shakespeare's Dramatic Art*, vol. ii. p. 276.
[2] *Lectures on Shakespeare*, by H. N. Hudson.

from the third scene of the first act, when she first "enters behind" to play the part of a sort of Greek chorus in the stormy interview between Rivers, Richard, and Elizabeth Grey, the Queen of Edward IV. On the Judas-like treachery of Richard she throws a terribly lurid light, when she holds the mirror of his deceit up to the latter. She is the one individual before whom Richard pales and trembles, though he affects to despise her curses. Albeit a banished woman, she comes and goes, as Ulrici points out,[1] to and from the palace, like some spirit whose passage none can stay. Hated, suspected, feared, none nevertheless dares to lay hands upon her, not even Richard when she warns Buckingham against him with the words, "Take care of yonder dog." She is at once the Cassandra and the chorus of the play, and in both rôles is startlingly impressive. Finally, Mrs. Jameson thus sums up the influence of Queen Margaret upon the development of the play: "Margaret, in bold defiance of history, but with fine dramatic effect, is introduced again in the gorgeous and polluted Court of Edward IV. There she stalks round the seat of her former greatness, like a terrible phantom of departed majesty, uncrowned, unsceptred, desolate, powerless—or like a vampire thirsting for blood—or like a grim prophetess of evil, imprecating that ruin on the head of her enemies, which she lived to see realised. The scene following the murder of the princes in the Tower, in which Queen Elizabeth and the Duchess of York sit down on the ground bewailing their desolation, and Margaret suddenly appears from behind them, like the very personification of woe, and seats herself beside them, revelling in their despair, is, in the general conception and effect, grand and appalling." [2]

[1] Ulrici, *Shakespeare's Dramatic Art*, vol. ii. p. 280.

[2] *Shakespeare's Heroines*, by Mrs. Jameson—"Margaret of Anjou"—Dents' edition, p. 328.

SECTION 8.—RICHARD II. 1593

From the fall of Richard III., Shakespeare now turned to that of the earlier Richard—Richard II. The two plays differ widely in the evidences they display of intellectual strength. The former revealed Shakespeare as a disciple of Marlowe, one who clung to conventional modes of treatment and of expression. The latter manifested not only a decided advance in technical skill, as well as increase of intellectual power, but a breaking away from the leading-strings of Marlowesque influence. No longer did he seem to desire or need the protecting ægis of the master's manner cast over his work, for in this play, immature though it be as compared with his later work, he stood forth, a master himself, mightier in some respects even than Marlowe, though traces of the influence of that dramatist's *Edward II.* can still be detected. Greater strength of pinion in sustained dramatic flight, deeper insight into the *nuances* and niceties of similar as well as contrasted types of character, and a keener perception into the interplay of ethical motives in the selection of one course of action in preference to another, were all representative qualities of the play, and stamp it as probably the final drama of Shakespeare's First Period or Period of Immaturity.

The play, before being included in the Folio of 1623, was issued in four Quartos, numbered respectively Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4, and bearing the dates 1597, 1598, 1608, 1615. In Q1 no author's name is given, and the Deposition Scene (IV. i. 154) did not appear. In Q2 the name "William Shakespeare" is given as author, but the Deposition Scene is still absent. In Q3, however, it appears, the edition being described as containing "new additions of the Parliament Scene, and the deposing of King Richard," while Q4 is prac-

tically a reprint of Q3, the author's name appearing in both. The Folio follows the text of Q4, though probably the prompter's version used for one or two scenes, will explain the slight divergences which appear.

That the "Deposition Scene," sometimes called the "Parliament Scene," formed a part of Shakespeare's original plan is unquestionable. Strong reasons, however, existed why, to the sensibilities of the Tudors, whose claim to the throne, by the circumstances of their descent, rested on a purely Parliamentary title, any such scene, if played, would prove unwelcome. Another objection to its retention, more cogent because more politically apparent, lay in the fact that Pope Clement VIII. had issued a Bull releasing Elizabeth's Catholic subjects from their allegiance, and directly inciting them to revolt against her authority. The Queen showed no little acerbity over the matter of Richard's fall, when conversing with William Lambard regarding his book, *Pandecta Rotulorum*, which deals with the reigns of the successive British sovereigns.[1]

Her Majesty likewise manifested displeasure at Sir John Hayward's publication of his *History of the First Years of the Reign of Henry IV.*, for on its appearance the author was immediately censured by the Star Chamber and committed to prison. These facts go to prove that Elizabeth's dislike to any allusions to the deposition of sovereigns by their subjects, proceeded from the realisation by the Queen that the Tudor claim to the throne was weak from a constitutional point of view, while the contention of some writers that Shakespeare's play was regarded by her as revolutionary in its tendency, is strengthened by the following incident, stated to have occurred in

[1] *Cf.* paper by the late Richard Simpson on "The Politics of Shakespeare's Historical Plays"—*New Shakespeare Society's Transactions*, part ii. p. 406.

1601, on the Friday afternoon before the revolt of the Earl of Essex—

"The story of Henry IV. being set forth in a play, and in that play there being set forth the killing of a king on the stage, the Friday before (the revolt), Sir Gilly Merrick and some other of the Earl's (Essex) train, having an humour to see a play, they must needs have the play of *Henry IV.* The players told them that was stale; that they would get nothing by playing that; but no play else would serve; and Sir Gilly Merrick gives forty shillings to Phillips the player to play this, besides whatsoever he could get." [1]

The writer of the above account has made the mistake of styling the play "Henry IV.," an error, however, corrected by Bacon himself in drawing up his "Declaration of the Practices and Treasons attempted and committed by Robert, late Earl of Essex, and his complices against her Majesty and her Kingdoms," in which the piece is called "the play of the deposing of King Richard the Second," while Augustine Phillipps, in his *Declaration*, calls it "the play of the deposyng and kyllyng of Kyng Rychard the Second." The only argument that can be alleged against the acceptance of the theory that this is the play in question, is the supposition that Phillipps would scarcely describe a piece, written only between seven and eight years before, as "so old and so long out of use."

We must take into account these considerations, however, (1) that the life of a drama was then very short; (2) that in a theatre where two and sometimes three new pieces were brought out every week, seven or eight years would appear a long time for a drama to be off the boards; (3) that *Richard II.* was never a popular piece from a player's point of view.

These arguments, therefore, lead us to regard the statement that Shakespeare's *Richard II.* was the play indicated in the *Essex State Trial Papers* as being, if not fact, at least possessed of strong probability.

Two other plays on the subject of King Richard II.

[1] Probably a portion of Attorney-General Bacon's speech at the trial of Essex.

were, however, in existence, to which reference must be made. One of these is mentioned in the *Diary* of Dr. Simon Forman, as having been witnessed by him at the Globe Theatre on 30th April 1611, and that it opened with Wat Tyler's revolt. Such features of similarity would therefore identify it with the old piece contained in Dodsley's *Collection*, "The Life and Death of Jack Straw."[1] The second one is that contained in the volume of MS. dramas known as the "Egerton MS." It possesses merits of its own, but deals with the reign in a manner altogether different from that of Shakespeare.

We come now to consider the date of composition of the drama. For this our evidence is almost wholly internal. There are, however, one or two external facts which must at the outset be kept in view. The play was mentioned by Francis Meres in his *Palladis Tamia* (1598). It shows decided indications of the influence of Marlowe's *Edward II.*, written in 1590, and printed in 1594. Samuel Daniel, moreover, in the second edition of the *History of the Civil Wars*, issued in 1595, seems to reveal traces of its turns of thought and rich imagery, while the poem and the play agree on one or two points in which both differ from history, such as Richard's meeting with the Queen after his return from Ireland and his public abdication.

The pre-eminently lyrical character of the drama; the entire absence of prose; the fact that out of 2644 lines, 2107 are in blank verse, and 537 in rhymed verse of various kinds; that the percentage of feminine endings is only 11, with four instances of light endings; that the percentage of run-on lines is 19.9, and of speech endings 7.3 — these circumstances point to

[1] *See* Hazlitt's *Dodsley*, vol. v. p. 379. In this play, in addition to Richard II., Walworth, Lord Mayor of London, John Ball, Wat Tyler, Hob Carter, all take part in the action of it, showing that the incidents were associated with the early portion of the reign.

a late date in the First Period as that of the play. When, however, we further consider the comparative frequency of classical allusions, the constant recurrence of puns, far-fetched conceits, wit drawn out to the point of exhaustion, when we note also the frequent presence of doggerel couplets and of rhyme-tags occurring at the end of scenes—these tests go to confirm the opinion that this play falls within the earliest cycle of the Shakespearian dramatic development, otherwise about 1593. During that same year Michael Drayton issued his *Pastorals*, and Thomas Nash his *Tears Over Jerusalem*, Marlowe his poem of *Hero and Leander*, and George Peele his *Edward I.*—all of them works which Shakespeare must have read —works, too, which probably went to the fashioning of his genius.

Of the sources whence Shakespeare drew the materials for this drama, there was first the second edition of Holinshed's *Chronicle of England, Scotland, and Ireland*, published in 1586, which alone gives the withering of the bay-trees (II. iv. 8); also Stow's *Annals* (1580), from which were drawn the details of Norfolk's triumphs in Palestine, when he

> —"fought
> For Jesu Christ in glorious Christian field,
> Streaming the ensign of the Christian cross,
> Against black pagans, Turks, and Saracens" (IV. i. 92-95);

also Berner's *Froissart* (1525), whence the incident of Richard resigning the crown to Bolingbroke (IV. i. 181-189) was doubtless drawn. Yet Shakespeare has not used his authorities with slavish imitation. There are divergences from these authorities, all of them making for greater interest and picturesque diversity in the drama—such as the introduction of the new characters of the Groom, with his pathetic reference to roan Barbary (V. v. 78), the Gardener (III. iv. 24), and the Servant (III. iv. 40); the death-scene of John of Gaunt with his splendid apostrophe to England

(II. i. 40), and one or two other instances of a like nature.

The scene is placed in England and Wales, and occasion is taken, both by Richard and Bolingbroke, to emphasise their love for their native land—the former by mouthing empty platitudes about weeping for joy to stand upon his kingdom once again, how he salutes her and does her favours with his royal hands, though rebels wound her with their horses' hoofs; the latter, by seeking to remedy the horrible and hateful abuses which a king who rules by impulse and not by righteousness has sown broadcast over the land.

The Time-Analysis of the play gives a duration to the action of fourteen days, but with indeterminable intervals between each, save in the case of the third and the seventh days. The historic duration of the incidents described in the drama was from 29th April 1398, to 12th March 1400, when the body of Richard was brought to London. The following is the detailed table of the time-analysis[1]—

Day					
I.	embracing	Act	I.	Sc.	i.; Interval.
II.	,,	,,	I.	,,	ii.; Interval.
III.	,,	,,	I.	,,	iii.
IV.	,,	,,	I.	,,	iv.; II. i.; Interval.
V.	,,	,,	II.	,,	ii.; Interval.
VI.	,,	,,	II.	,,	iii.; Interval.
VII.	,,	,,	II.	,,	iv.; III. i.
VIII.	,,	,,	III.	,,	ii.; Interval.
IX.	,,	,,	III.	,,	iii.; Interval.
X.	,,	,,	III.	,,	iv.; Interval.
XI.	,,	,,	IV.	,,	i.; V. i.; Interval
XII.	,,	,,	V.	,,	ii.-iv.; Interval.
XIII.	,,	,,	V.	,,	v.; Interval.
XIV.	,,	,,	V.	,,	vi

The plot is founded on Holinshed's *Chronicle*, while the action of the play deals with the beginning and the end of the reign, viz., the quarrel between Mowbray

[1] Daniel's "Time Analysis of the Plays of Shakespeare"—*Transactions New Shakespeare Society*, 1878.

and Bolingbroke, son of John of Gaunt, and its ultimate outcome, the deposition of the King.

When the drama opens Richard had already sunk his kingly credit by his wanton extravagances, his utter disregard of the individual rights of man, his thoughtless, if not premeditated cruelty, and his determination to govern by the dictates of his own capricious will, and not by the laws of the realm. From this synonym for all that was lawless and unscrupulous, even when vested in the legal insignia of royal authority, men turned with a sense of relief to Bolingbroke, the type of the lofty majesty of law, even though he was at this time a banished man through the obedience and respect he had shown for it.[1]

The play, after a few initial scenes to emphasise the terrible turpitude and guilt of the King, and to reveal the cause why the whole realm, despite the love it had once professed for the fair son of the Black Prince, now hated the very sight of him, and longed for some calm, strong nature able to seize the helm of the ship of state and to steer it resolutely into the haven of constitutional security and peace—the play practically resolved itself into a duel to the death between Richard Plantagenet and Henry Bolingbroke.

There had been fierce party quarrels between the nobility, and Richard, despite his loudly vaunted boast that he stood entirely neutral, was known to be secretly allied with Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, against John of Gaunt and his own relatives. That Mowbray was not the murderer of the Duke of Gloster, Richard's uncle, but that Richard himself had instigated the crime, barbed all the more bitterly the accusation which Bolingbroke brought against the former, because it caused the charge to point, not

[1] *Cf.* J. R. Green's *Short History of the English People* for a comparison between Shakespeare's picture of England at this time and the reality. If anything the dramatist under-estimates the misery.

alone towards Norfolk, but to the figure which stood behind him—Richard!

That the latter realised to the full Bolingbroke's meaning is evident from his nervous aside, "How high a pitch his resolution soars," also by his anxious eagerness to hush up further examination at all costs, and to reconcile the adversaries. When this failed, and he had to allow the trial by combat at Coventry to proceed, he stopped the tournament before the combatants joined issue and banished the two from the land. Alarmed, however, by the demonstrations in Bolingbroke's favour, he endeavoured to check the discontent by making the exile of the latter, whom he hated, to last only six years, while that of the man he loved and who had been his faithful friend, was to be perpetual.

Such a course of action virtually decided Richard's fate, as Norfolk's son, Lord Mowbray, says in 2 *Henry IV.*, IV. ii. 125. Bolingbroke retired beyond the seas to mature his plans, and bide his time until Richard's mad act of confiscating all John of Gaunt's lands, money, and possessions the moment breath had left his body, precipitated the crisis. Meanwhile, Richard proceeded to Ireland to quell the rebellion which his misrule had aroused there, leaving affairs in England to be managed by his wretched creatures, Bushy, Bagot, and Green. This was Bolingbroke's opportunity. He landed at Ravenspur on the Humber, and found a nation utterly weary of Richard's autocratic folly and longing for the strong hand of a constitutional ruler. Richard hurried back from Ireland to find the realm no longer his. He made an enforced surrender of his authority to Bolingbroke, and retired to Pomfret, where in a few short months he was done to death by Sir Pierce Exton, at the private instigation of the new monarch, albeit in public the deed and the doer were alike repudiated.

Such is the plot. While by no means artistically constructed, it is so constituted that Shakespeare's

favourite device in his earlier periods—contrasted pairs of characters and of circumstances — has full play.

The characters of the drama continue to reveal greater power of individual portraiture, enhanced skill in differentiating minor qualities so as to emphasise difference amid similarity, and a defter draughtsmanship in executing clear-cut outlines in few words. Such subordinate personages as Sir Pierce Exton, Sir Stephen Scroop, the Lord Marshal, Lord Fitzwater, Lord Willoughby, Lord Ross, and Harry Percy (Hotspur), also Lord Berkeley, the Earl of Salisbury, the Duke of Surrey, may be dismissed in a few sentences. While the outline of each personality is clearly limned and individually differentiated by some touch that marks it off as distinct from all the others, the details of complex characterisation which give vitality and *vraisemblance* to the creation are absent. The minor personages of the drama, therefore, though well outlined, are statuesque and lifeless.

There are other characters which, though minor, exhibit some trait of individual idiosyncrasy or of temperamental quality which gives special prominence to that person in his relation to others. In this class stands Aumerle, whose loyalty to Richard has been based upon self-interest, and whose desire to hail the rising sun of Bolingbroke is dashed by the fear lest, if he did so, his share in the death of John of Gaunt might come out. He weighs the chances and determines to take the step. The result is as he feared. He is accused. But his champion comes from an unexpected quarter, Bolingbroke himself, who, when he hears that the banished Norfolk can be adduced as a witness of Aumerle's guilt, decrees that naught should be done until the exiled nobleman can be recalled. On learning of his death, however, he orders that " all differences shall rest under gage " until the day of trial by battle can be appointed. The justice,

the calm firmness, and the absolute impartiality of the new King crush all that opposition which would have arisen under the vacillating sway of Richard. It was this sense of security under a ruler so fair that led Aumerle, after his father York had discovered the full extent of his treason, to make a clean breast of it to the new monarch, who instantly forgave him, despite the remonstrances of Aumerle's own father—Brutus-like willing to see his traitor-son condemned to death. By that act he was to win a faithful friend for life, one who was to fight and fall gloriously for Bolingbroke's son, Henry V., at Agincourt.

The favourites and servants of Richard, Sir John Bushy, Sir William Bagot, Sir Henry Green, men whom Bolingbroke rightly styled

> —" the caterpillars of the commonwealth,
> Which I have sworn to weed and pluck away,"

are portrayed with all the incisive power Shakespeare possessed of painting men selfishly given over to the satisfaction of their own ends, and caring not what might happen to the kingdom provided they could keep their master supplied with means to prosecute his career of extravagance, and themselves with money to appropriate to their own ends. Bolingbroke's stinging rebuke as he dismisses Bushy and Green to execution is not a whit too severe—

> " You have misled a prince, a royal king,
> A happy gentleman in blood and lineaments,
> By you unhappied and disfigured clean."

Their only claim to sympathy is that they died like brave men.

John of Gaunt, the Duke of Lancaster, and uncle of the King, only appears in the first act, and in the first scene of the second, when his death is recorded. Richard, on receipt of the news, immediately proceeds to confiscate the dead man's goods, lands, and revenues. Old Gaunt is not by any means the historic

character, the friend of Wyclif. He is a noble fiction of Shakespeare's imagination, even though he is not historic, for the true John of Gaunt would scarcely have burst out into that splendidly patriotic apostrophe to England just before his death—

> "This royal throne of kings, this sceptred isle,
> This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
> This other Eden, demi-paradise,
> This fortress, built by nature for herself,
> Against infection and the hand of war."

Out of a few scattered hints and suggestions, Shakespeare has limned one of the noblest, one of the most dignified, as well as one of the most liberal-minded of all his gallery of English statesmen. He was an infinitely greater man than Bolingbroke, his son, for he possessed the saving gift of imagination. His stern yet lofty rebuke to Richard reveals at once the true patriot and the noble soul, and, as Hazlitt says, is one of the most eloquent speeches ever penned.[1]

The Duke of York, his brother, is the reverse, but his vacillation proceeds from laudable motives. Coleridge says of him: "There is scarcely anything in Shakespeare, in its degree, more admirably drawn than York's character; his religious loyalty struggling with a deep grief and indignation at the King's follies; his adherence to his word and faith once given, in spite of all, even the most natural, feelings. You see in him the weakness of old age, and the overwhelmingness of circumstances, for a time surmounting his sense of duty—the junction of both exhibited in his boldness and feebleness in immediate act; and then again his effort to retrieve himself in abstract loyalty, even at the heavy price of the loss of his son. This species of accidental and adventitious weakness is brought into parallel with Richard's continually increasing energy of thought and as constantly diminish-

[1] Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays.*

ing power of acting." [1] Richard has such faith in York that on the eve of his departure for Ireland he creates him

> —" lord governor of England,
> For he is just, and always loved us well; "

and, on meeting Bolingbroke after the latter's landing in England, York, as Richard's representative, greets him with terms of bitter reproach—

> " In gross rebellion, and detested treason:
> Thou art a banished man, and here art come,
> Before the expiration of thy time,
> In braving arms against thy sovereign."

Yet a few lines further on he consents to accompany Bolingbroke to Bristol Castle, sends letters for him to the Queen of Richard, and finally becomes so passionate a partisan of the usurper that he rides post-haste to the latter to impeach his own son. Dr. Stopford Brooke sums up the character in his own incisive way when he says: " The Duke of York is a good sketch, but in his senile bluster of words, and his weak reversal of them when any action is required, and in his soft yielding to fate, he is only a faded representation of what Richard, without his touch of genius, might have been as an old man." [2] By some critics the character in its persistent fickleness is regarded as a political satire and not as representative of any specific personage.

On the other hand, the portrait of Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, contrasts strongly in this particular with York. From first to last he supports Richard loyally, and receives as his reward—perpetual banishment! His bearing is noble and dignified. The crime of the murder of Gloster, whereof John of Gaunt earlier and Bolingbroke later accuse him, he treats with lofty contempt. The voice of

[1] Coleridge, *Shakespeare and the Elizabethan Dramatists.*
[2] *On Ten Plays of Shakespeare,* by Stopford A. Brooke, p. 78.

innocence and of honour speaks in his voluntary confession, and his farewell to his sovereign, who has so basely sacrificed him to his own cowardice, is instinct with generous devotion.

Of the women, the Duchess of Gloster, the widow of the murdered Duke, is a mere shadow that flits across the stage, feebly adjuring Gaunt, ere he leaves for Coventry, to be present at the trial by combat between Mowbray and Bolingbroke, and to assume the duty of avenging his brother's death, an office old Gaunt is alike unwilling and unfit to assume.

The Queen of Richard II. is but an amiable doll, whom her husband's sickly sentimentalism has rendered equally with himself a puling emotionalist, one who talks about her husband as a "fair rose and map of honour," also as "her sweet guest," her "sweet Richard," and as "the beauteous inn where no hard-favoured grief should lodge." Even amid prosperity she had been a creature of moods, who had been oppressed by "a nameless woe," and looked towards the future with foreboding dread. When her husband pours out his heart to her in fluent follies, in place of cutting him short with some such reminder as, "It is man's place to do, not to dream," she listens to him, and by the fact of listening presupposes sympathy.

We come now to consider the contrasted pair of leading characters, Richard Plantagenet and Henry Bolingbroke. The one is the foil of the other. Richard is little more than a mouthing sentimentalist, whose will, like Hamlet's, is weakened by thinking about doing without daring to do. Though every speech he utters is instinct with lofty lyric fervour, his intentions stop at words. Of Richard, Hazlitt thus writes: "We feel neither respect nor love for the deposed monarch: for he is as wanting in energy as in principle: but we pity him, for he pities himself. His heart is by no means hardened against himself,

but bleeds afresh at every new stroke of mischance, and his sensibility, absorbed in his own person and unused to misfortune, is not only tenderly alive to its own sufferings, but without the fortitude to bear them. He is, however, human in his distresses, for to feel pain, sorrow, weakness, disappointment, remorse, is the lot of humanity, and we sympathise with him accordingly. But the sufferings of the man make us forget that he ever was a king." Hazlitt's analysis of Bolingbroke's character is most incisive. He says: "The character of Bolingbroke, afterwards Henry IV., is drawn with a masterly hand, patient for occasion and then steadily availing himself of it, seeing his advantage afar off, but only seizing on it when he has it within his reach, humble, crafty, bold, aspiring, encroaching by regular but slow degrees, building power on opinion and cementing opinion by power." [1]

Stopford Brooke, in his analysis of the contrasted pair of characters, says of Richard in the concluding scenes of the drama: "This is not the Richard whom we have known. He is all changed. Shakespeare, who has conceived Richard's original character as of good loving stuff underneath his native weakness . . . felt that since he was betrayed by weakness of will, not by native viciousness, into his habits, could not pass through so fierce a torrent of sorrow and misfortune without losing what was base and weak in him, and recovering what might be noble and strong. He is purged of his weakness; he is purged of his selfishness; he is purged of his blindness; he is purged of his *insolentia;* he speaks no longer with a flux of words; all he says is brief and clear. He sees with equal steadiness the past, the present, and the future. His love is no longer a feeble sentiment."

Dr. Stopford Brooke then turns to Bolingbroke: "Over against (Richard) the excited, wavering man, is set the cool, steadfast man with the single aim.

[1] Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays.*

Bolingbroke wins the day, but he is not the protagonist of the play. His presence, now that he is again brought face to face with Richard, is used by Shakespeare not so much to display his character as to expand the wild, feeble, sentimental character of the King. . . . Bolingbroke speaks to the King whom he despises, with covert sarcasm. At heart he is vengeful for Gloster's death, angry with himself, sorry for his father, indignant with the King's treatment of England, but nothing of these passions appears without. The needs of the hour control his soul; and his thirst for power is curbed into waiting. He is content to believe in himself and his fate. Exiled, he knows he will return, though exile galls him to the core. A full revelation of his practical, clear-sighted, steady character is given; 'Let me come home to plain fact, it seems to say:' and then we know that Richard, who never sees the facts around him, will be broken to pieces when he meets Bolingbroke."

In a word, Bolingbroke was everything that Richard was not. Where the latter ostentatiously proclaimed himself superior to the laws of the land, the former showed exaggerated respect for them. Where Richard expended his energy in sentimental platitudes about the beauty of duty, Bolingbroke exemplified that beauty in action. To Richard the position of monarch is a divine office where the royal will is sole law; to Bolingbroke it is a post surrounded by legislative safeguards, any one of which, if broken, might hurl a monarch into ruin. In a word, the latter is a "doer" in the highest and best sense, of the kingly duties, while the former is a mere dreamer about them.

Richard II., then, was a play full of strongly contrasted characterisation, along with profound analysis of conflicting motives. As a stage drama it has never appealed to the ordinary theatre-goer owing to the nature of its interest being too subjective, too much concerned with subtle passions and affections,

and too little with those grand elemental emotions which constitute the *milieu* in which nine-tenths of humanity live, move, and have their being.

With *Richard II.* ended Shakespeare's "First Period," otherwise the "Period of Immature Art." The late A. C. Swinburne contended that this drama must be regarded as Shakespeare's earliest attempt at historic drama, owing to the pre-eminently lyrical style of the play. While agreeing with him so far that the influence of Greene as well as of Marlowe is traceable in the play, I maintain, on the other hand, that all the internal evidence of the metrical tests, etc., points to its being the latest drama of the First Period, and that its lyric style was due to a desire on the part of Shakespeare to compete on his own ground with one whom he had regarded as his master, and whose "lyrical play" of *Edward II.* had recently been successfully produced.[1]

[1] *Cf.* Charles Lamb's splendid tribute to Marlowe's *Edward II.*, Lamb's Works (Dent's edition), *Specimens of the Dramatists*, vol. ix. p. 56.

CHAPTER V

THE INTERMEDIATE PERIOD OF THE POEMS

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, however, was not only great in one form of poetry—the dramatic—he was great also as a metrical story-teller. In April 1593, he published *Venus and Adonis*, a poem which at once became popular, being re-issued in successive editions in 1594, 1596, 1599, 1602—the last-named year witnessing the publication of two editions. The poem was dedicated to "the Right Honourable Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton and Baron of Titchfield." This nobleman, the third earl of the name, born on 6th October 1573, educated at St. John's College, Cambridge, where he graduated M.A. in 1589, being also admitted to the same degree at Oxford three years later, was therefore about twenty years of age when the dedication appeared. That he had already shown himself deeply interested in letters and many branches of contemporary culture is well known. His parents had both brought immense wealth to their union, while his grandfather, Lord Chancellor under Henry VIII., had at the time of the dissolution of the monasteries received extensive grants of lands in Hampshire, in particular the wealthy abbeys in the New Forest, Titchfield, and Beaulieu.[1] The title was conferred on him in the second year of the reign of Edward VI. His son, the father of Shakespeare's friend, loved pomp and splendour, a trait inherited in turn by his son. The third earl came into his

[1] For fuller details *cf.* Gervase Markham's *Honour in his Perfection* (1624), the Loseley MSS., edited by A. J. Kempe, p. 240; and finally Mr. Sidney Lee's *Life of Shakespeare*, Appendix iii. p. 390.

honours while yet a minor, and, as was customary, became a royal ward under the Queen, the great Chief Secretary of State and Lord High Treasurer acting for her as the boy's guardian. The fact that he had the reputation of spending a studious childhood and youth, showed that he laid the old statesman's advice to heart, "Do well all you do." With the latter he also corresponded on political subjects, a letter to Burghley, written in excellent Latin, being still preserved at Hatfield on the theme, "All men are moved to the pursuit of Virtue by the hope of reward."

These facts are mentioned to show that not his rank nor his riches, nor his influence, but his personal endowments had drawn Shakespeare's heart to the young Earl, and had led him to dedicate his first work, "the first heir of my invention," to this handsome, courtly, cultured nobleman, who, on discovering the pearl of peerless intellect and imagination beneath the disguise of the despised player, had extended to the latter the privilege of his friendship.

In his relations with the Earl, Shakespeare showed a manly self-respect. No grovelling tribute was it that he paid Southampton in his dedication. Through it ran a strain of appreciation, but it was accompanied by no self-depreciation, a custom so common at the time. He simply referred to his, as yet, untried pinion in poetry, and pledged himself, if his lordship looked with favourable eye on this work, not to rest until he had honoured him with some graver labour.

"The first heir of my invention" indicates that, in all probability, it was the earliest of all his writings. If so, the fact would go to prove at how early an age the genius of Shakespeare had borne fruit. We may infer, therefore, that the poem was at least in existence as early as the beginning of 1593, seeing it was entered on the Stationers' Register on the 18th April of that year, and this would imply that it had been written at the time when he was engaged in cobbling

plays. There is, however, a breath of the country groves and glades blowing through it, suggestive of a date not long after he had left the banks of Avon. In these circumstances, the wiser course is not to be too dogmatic as to date, but to say the poem was composed some time between 1587 and 1592.

If the date be in doubt, there is next to none regarding the source whence the subject of the poem was taken. Almost certainly, Shakespeare found it in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, where, in Book X., the legend of "Venus and Adonis" is given, though with some curious differences from the story as told in the poem. With Professor Spencer Baynes we agree that Shakespeare read and enjoyed his Ovid in the original, and not through the medium of Golding's translation, first published in 1567, and re-issued in its fifth edition in 1593.

The poem bears all the marks of a juvenile composition—yet what a juvenile! The absolute, almost monotonous smoothness of the rhythm is the first quality that strikes one. How skilfully it is adapted to the subject, and how aptly it is varied to express the changing emotions of the stricken queen of love! Every scene is described with a distinctness that makes it realistically visible to the mind's eye. It is filled with verbal mannerisms and conceits, it is overladen, moreover, with sensuous and vividly picturesque imagery, the love-scenes are prolonged until they cloy by sheer excess of feeling, yet despite all, the poem is one of the most seductively beautiful in the whole range of English literature. Only three other men in the succession of our poets could have produced such a work, full of endless variations on the themes, Beauty, Lust, and Death—Edmund Spenser, Christopher Marlowe, and John Keats.

In his choice of a stanza Shakespeare took "the staffe of six verses" which some few years before Puttenham, in his *Arte of English Poesie*, had described

as "not only most usual but most pleasant to th' eare." Shakespeare managed it with perfect ease and felicity, and if, at times, the measure is so unspeakably smooth that it becomes monotonous, that was the fault of the time not of the man.

The success of *Venus and Adonis* induced its author once more to try his fortune with the poetry-reading public. A new work was entered at Stationers' Hall, on 9th May 1594, by John Harrison, being entitled in the official entry "The Ravyshment of Lucrece." When, however, the poem came to be published, the title stood simply; *Lucrece — London — Printed by Richard Field for John Harrison and are to be sold at the sign of the White Greyhound in Paules Churchyard*, 1594. Dr. Furnivall considers that this first edition was seen through the press by Shakespeare himself. The edition, however, does not appear to have been issued as a whole, but in batches as the corrections were made. The consequence is that there are important differences existing between individual copies of the same first impression. Issued in octavo in 1594, other editions appeared in 1596,[1] 1598, 1600, 1602,[1] 1607, 1616, 1624, 1632. Its subsequent neglect, as has been well said, remains one of the enigmas of literature.[2]

The poem is written in that seven-lined stanza, the "rhyme-royal" (*ababbcc*), copied by Chaucer from the French poet, Guillaume de Machault, a measure adapted for the production of the most varied as well as the most sublime lyrical effects. Employed by Chaucer in the *Compleint unto Pité* and in *Troilus and Creseyde*, also by Daniel in his *Complaint of Rosamund*, four years before *Lucrece*, also by Edmund Spenser in his *Hymnes*, it was at once a popular and an effective metre.

The source of the story lay in Ovid's *Fasti*, though

[1] Stated to have been issued, but no known copy now exists.
[2] Wyndham's *Poems of Shakespeare*, p. xciii.

Shakespeare may already have seen the theme treated in William Painter's *Palace of Pleasure* (1566). The subject was a favourite one with all the writers in the romantic ages of our literature. "The *Fasti* had been translated into English verse before 1570," says Warton, "and this would explain the many little pieces then current on the subject of Lucretia, such as 'A Ballett called the grevious complaynt of Lucrece, 1568,' and afterwards in 1569-70, 'A Ballet entituled the death of Lucryssie.' . . . At this period of our poetry we find the same subject occupying the attention of the public for many years, and successively presented in new and various forms by different poets. Lucretia was the grand example of conjugal fidelity throughout the Gothic ages." [1]

In this poem Shakespeare redeemed his promise to his patron, Lord Southampton, to present to him "a graver labour" than the *Venus and Adonis*. Unquestionably the *Lucrece* represented this work, being graver alike in theme and treatment, while the tone of the dedication, so ardent in its profession of devotion, marks a great advance in the poet's friendship with Southampton, from the terms of conventional respect in which the former dedication had been couched. The man who could write to another, "What I have done is yours; what I have to do is yours, being part in all I have devoted yours," was bound to him by ties closer than those of mere acquaintanceship.

The plot details the ravishing of Lucretia, the wife of Collatinus, by Sextus Tarquinius, son of the King of Rome. The "Argument" of the poem, as given in the first edition, is written, in all likelihood, by Shakespeare himself. As this probably is the only extant example, outside the plays and the dedications of the

[1] Warton, *History of English Poetry*, vol. iv. pp. 296-7 (Hazlitt's edition).

two poems, of Shakespeare's command of prose, the paragraph is given as it stands—

"Lucius Tarquinius—for his excessive pride surnamed Superbus—after he had caused his own father-in-law, Servius Tullius, to be cruelly murdered, and, contrary to the Roman laws and customs, not requiring or staying for the people's suffrages, had possessed himself of the kingdom, went, accompanied with his sons and other noblemen of Rome, to besiege Ardea. During which siege, the principal men of the army, meeting one evening at the tent of Sextus Tarquinius, the king's son, in their discourses after supper, every one commended the virtues of his own wife; among whom, Collatinus extolled the incomparable chastity of his wife Lucretia. In that pleasant humour they all posted to Rome; and intending, by their secret and sudden arrival, to make trial of that which every one had before avouched, only Collatinus finds his wife, though it were late in the night, spinning amongst her maids; the other ladies were all found dancing and revelling, or in several disports. Whereupon the noblemen yielded Collatinus the victory, and his wife the fame. At that time Sextus Tarquinius being inflamed with Lucrece's beauty, yet smothering his passions for the present, departed with the rest back to the camp; from whence he shortly after privily withdrew himself, and was, according to his state, royally entertained and lodged by Lucrece at Collatium. The same night, he treacherously stealeth into her chamber, violently ravished her, and early in the morning speedeth away. Lucrece, in this lamentable plight, hastily despatcheth messengers, one to Rome for her father, another to the camp for Collatine. They came, the one accompanied with Junius Brutus, the other with Publius Valerius; and finding Lucrece attired in mourning habit, demanded the cause of her sorrow. She, first taking an oath of them for her revenge, revealed the actor, and whole manner of his dealing, and withal suddenly stabbed herself. Which done, with one consent they all avowed to root out the whole hated family of the Tarquins; and bearing the dead body to Rome, Brutus acquainted the people with the doer and manner of the vile deed, with a bitter invective against the tyranny of the king: wherewith the people were so moved, that with one consent and a general acclamation, the Tarquins were all exiled, and the state government changed from kings to consuls."

The two characters of Sextus and Lucrece are portrayed with almost excessive elaboration. The analysis of Tarquin's motives, the description of the fire which the chaste beauty of the wife of Collatinus kindled in the bestial soul of Sextus, how it burned more fiercely the longer he dwelt upon her image, the horror of Lucrece as she contemplates the terrible alternatives her brutal ravisher offered her, the cowardly dread of Sextus when the deed of shame was accom-

plished, with the soul-searing anguish suffered by Lucrece as she contemplated not only her own misery but the misery of her husband—all these are portrayed with a realistic vividness of fancy as well as a pathetic beauty of expression that is infinitely impressive. The glory of her pure past as maid and as matron is tarnished for ever by the consciousness that the holy altar of the conjugal relation had been defiled, therefore death was the only means of both vindicating her honour and purifying the sacred shrine of her chastity. Altogether, the theme and the treatment of *Lucrece*, not merely betoken a deepening of Shakespeare's ethical consciousness and a broadening of his intellectual as distinct from his human sympathies, but reveal greater keenness of spiritual vision into the subtle relations of things, with a power of realising and understanding the soul and spirit of Nature. Nature acts to men as their deepest and holiest teacher, revealing to them her own marvellous secrets, when she finds that the soul's vision is purified from sensuous grossness.

These two poems, therefore, despite their exquisite beauty of technique, treat passion as something aloof, something exoteric or objective. For this reason, and for their lack of flesh and blood vitality, Hazlitt has styled them a couple of ice-houses,[1] and Professor Raleigh thinks they have been suggested by pictures. That these are, so far, true criticisms, any one may verify who notes how the poet persistently analyses the feelings of Venus and Adonis, of Sextus, Collatinus, and Lucrece, not as the experience of some one in whom he has a vital interest, but as a problem in psychology, which, having been set him to solve, he solves by a train of reasoning wholly objective and exoteric. As Hazlitt adds: "A beautiful thought is sure to be lost in an endless commentary on it. The

[1] *Shakespeare's Characters*, by William Hazlitt, Works (Dents' edition), vol. i. p. 358; Prof. Raleigh, *Shakespeare*, p. 81.

speakers are like persons who have leisure and inclination to make riddles on their own situation and to twist and turn every object of interest into acrostics and anagrams." [1]

The fame accruing to Shakespeare from the publication of these two poems was great, and praise flowed in upon him from all quarters. Willobie, in his *Avisa* [2] (September 1594), refers to the work, and Michael Drayton, in his *Legend of Matilda* (1594), said that the story of Lucrece was now "revived to live another age." In the *Polimanteia*, William Clerke (1595) declared that "sweet Shakespeare" deserved "all praise for his Lucrecia"; also in one of the sonnets in his *Epigramms*, John Weever addressed the poet as "honey-tongued Shakespeare," and characterised the two poems as an achievement unmatchable, while Richard Carew ranks him with Marlowe as our English Catullus. Edmund Spenser, in *Colin Clout's come Home Again* (1594), makes an allusion to Shakespeare which, though veiled under a pseudonym, is quite recognisable—

> "And there, though last not least, is Aetion.
> A gentler shepherd may nowhere be found,
> Whose muse, full of high thoughts invention,
> Doth like himself heroically sound."

In the *Return from Parnassus* also the following critical opinion is passed upon Shakespeare's poetical work—

> "*Ingenioso.*—William Shakespeare?
> *Judicio.*—Who loves Adonis' love or Lucrece Rape!
> His sweeter verse contains heart-robbing life,
> Could but a graver subject him content
> Without love's foolish, lazy languishment."

[1] Hazlitt, *Works*, vol. i. p. 359.
[2] *Willobie his Avisa*, edited by C. Hughes, p. 15.

CHAPTER VI

SHAKESPEARE'S LIFE DURING HIS SECOND PERIOD (1594-1601)

SHAKESPEARE'S life during his Second Period of development, viz., from 1594 to 1601, was marked by few incidents of what may be called an outstanding character. The period was that of his "Maturing Art," when already he was rapidly advancing towards that complete mastery over all the resources of his craft that distinguished his epoch of maturity.

In Christmas 1594, we have the first reference to Shakespeare the player on the occasion of his performing before the Queen at Greenwich Palace. The following entry occurs in the accounts of the Treasurer of the Chamber: "To William Kempe, William Shakespeare, and Richard Burbage, servauntes to the Lord Chamberleyne, upon the Councilles warrant dated at Whitehall xvto Marcij, 1594, for twoe several comedies or enterludes showed by them before her Majestie in Christmas tyme, laste paste, viz., upon St. Stephen's day and Innocentes daye xiij li. vj s. viii d. and by way of Her Majesties reward vj li. xiij s. iiij d., in all xx li.

"For making ready at Grenewich for the Qu. Majestie, againnst her Highnes coming thether by the space of viij daies, mense Decembr, 1594, as appereth by a bill signed by the Lord Chamberleyne, viij li. xiij s. iiij d. (MS. ibid.)

"To Thos. Sheffeilde, under-keaper of her Majestie's house at Grenewich for thallowaunce of viij labourers there three several nightes at xij d. the man, by reason it was night-woorke, for making cleane, the

Greate Chamber, the Presence, the Galleries and Clossettes, mense Decembr, 1594, xxiiij s." (MS. ibid.)

The mere fact of Shakespeare's appearance between the two names given, of Kempe and Burbage, proves his popularity both as actor and author. The former was regarded as unquestionably the foremost comedian of his age, while Burbage had no rival as a tragedian. That Shakespeare was more than an average actor is pretty generally believed, the old stock legend that the "Ghost" in *Hamlet* was the top of his performance being now discredited. I am inclined to agree with Mr. Sidney Lee that Shakespeare's summons to act at Court was possibly due in part to personal interest in himself. The Queen, until the end of her life, had a special regard for Shakespeare, as also had her successor, who, as we shall see immediately, I am strongly disposed to think, had met the dramatist during his tour in Scotland. The phrase employed by Ben Jonson—

> —"those flights upon the banks of Thames
> That so did take Eliza and our James"[1]—

was neither conventional nor idly complimentary to the memory of the dead dramatist. It recorded a historic fact—the delight these two monarchs took in the achievements of our poet both as player and playwright.

There is a tradition of old standing that Elizabeth so delighted in Shakespeare's society that she frequently commanded his attendance at Court both in a friendly and in an official capacity. On one occasion when he was playing before her the rôle of the French King in *Henry V.*, she designedly threw her glove on that part of the stage across which he had to pass. The scene wherein he was appearing was that in which "ambassadors from Harry of England" craved ad-

[1] Ben Jonson's recommendatory poem prefixed to the First Folio.

mittance. Without showing the slightest hesitation, he walked slowly towards the glove uttering the words of the play as assigned to the French King, "We'll give them present audience. Go and bring them," then he added this interpolation in the same dignified tone of voice—

> "Though now engaged with this high embassage,
> Stoop we to lift our Cousin, England's glove." [1]

During the last ten years of Elizabeth's reign there were numerous representations of Shakespeare's plays at her various palaces of Greenwich, Richmond, and Whitehall, while another tradition records that the Queen was so delighted with the creation of "Falstaff" in *Henry IV.*, that she wished to see him in love. From this cause the *Merry Wives of Windsor* took its rise, of which more anon.

During the Christmas holidays of 1594, there were rare doings at Gray's Inn. The students of the Inn had usually, in the past, had some sort of dramatic entertainment, revels, masques, burlesque performances, and the like. On this occasion the students of the Inner Temple were invited to attend, and did so, being received with great honour, and many mutual compliments were passed amongst them. The play to be presented was the *Comedy of Errors* (written, as we have seen, in 1591), but owing to defective arrangements, considerable confusion resulted, and the Templarians retired in disgust. After the preliminary dancing and sports were concluded, "a Comedy of Errors, like to Plautus his Menechmus, was played by the players, so that the night was begun and continued to the end in nothing but confusion and errors, wherefore it was ever afterwards called the Night of Errors." [2]

[1] The tradition was told to me by the late Professor Masson, to whom it had been related by De Quincey, who in turn had received it from Charles Lamb, who in his turn had received it from Macklin.

[2] *Gesta Grayorum* : see *ante*, p. 87.

In the year 1594, the play *The Taming of a Shrew*, the "foundation" whereon our poet erected the structure of his own fine drama, *The Taming of the Shrew*, in 1595, was published, but attracted little notice.

Shakespeare meantime manifested an industry and a fecundity absolutely marvellous. Besides his daily work as a player, he appears to have done all the drama-adapting that was required for his company. On 16th April 1594, Ferdinando Stanley, Lord Derby, died, and the company, of which Shakespeare was a member, became the "servants", of Henry Carey, first Lord Hunsdon, who was appointed Lord Chamberlain. He dying in July 1596, was succeeded by his son and heir, George Carey, second Lord Hunsdon, who in turn became Lord Chamberlain in March 1597.

The successive theatres in which Shakespeare played were, as has been said (see *ante*, p. 49), "The Theatre" in Shoreditch near Finsbury Fields,[1] the earliest house wherein he appeared: the second was "The Rose," opened by his company in 1592. In 1594 he was attached for a time to the new theatre at Newington Butts, while from 1595 to 1599 he played in "The Curtain" in Moorfields. In 1599 the Burbages, Richard and Cuthbert, built the "Globe Theatre" on the Bankside. From the year in question until near his retirement in 1611, the last-named house was the scene of all his triumphs, dramatic and histrionic.

We now come to consider the question where Shakespeare resided during his busy London life. As far as can be ascertained, from about 1589 to 1595 he seems to have lived in one or more houses in the parish of St. Helens, Bishopsgate. For a subsidy levied in 1595 he was assessed at 5*s*., the capital value being £5. In 1598 the assessment had risen to 13*s*. 8*d*.[2] He

[1] Cf. *Early London Theatres*, by T. F. Ordish, F.S.A., pp. 33–76.

[2] *See* paper by Prof. J. W. Hales in *Athenæum*, 26th March 1904. The figures are taken from *Exchequer Lay Subsidies*, City of London, 146-369—Public Record Office.

appears, however, to have left St. Helens, for Malone quotes a memorandum by Alleyn in which the statement is made that in 1596 Shakespeare lodged near the Bear Garden in Southwark.

During the year 1909 some very interesting and extraordinary discoveries were made by Professor Charles William Wallace, Ph.D., Associate Professor of English Language and Literature in the University of Nebraska. Dr. Wallace was the first patiently and systematically to examine the documents covering the Shakespearian period, which lie in the Public Record Office in London. All honour to the man whose unwearied industry (backed up by that of his devoted wife) has thrown such a flood of new light upon Shakespeare's career. All the facts I am about to mention have been rescued from oblivion by Dr. and Mrs. Wallace,[1] and with them rests all the honour of the discovery.

It appears that in 1598 Shakespeare had gone to live with a French Huguenot refugee named Christopher Mountjoy. This fact completely overthrows the theory that Shakespeare's wife was with him in London.

Mountjoy, who was a maker of wigs and of ladies' head-dresses, resided in a corner house at the intersection of Muggle Street (Mugwell or Monkwell) and Silver Street, on the dividing line between Farringdon Ward on the west and Cripplegate Ward on the east. He appears to have lived as a lodger there from 1598 to 1604, otherwise the latter part of the Second Period of his development and the first two years of his Third Period. He had known the family for thirteen years prior to 1609, when he was called upon to give evidence in court in a case as to certain property.

It appears that an Englishman resident in France, Humphrey Fludd, had married there a Frenchwoman, a widow named Madame Bellott, who by her

[1] See *Harper's Magazine* for March 1910.

first husband had a son living, called Stephen. The latter was very anxious to learn wig-making and tire-making. Fludd, therefore, prevailed upon Christopher Mountjoy to take his stepson as apprentice, the Fludds agreeing to clothe the lad, and Mountjoy to supply maintenance and his linen.

This took place in 1598. Stephen Bellott was received into the house as one of the family—that house where William Shakespeare was already in residence as a lodger. The lad found favour with the whole household. Affable, kindly, and sympathetic, besides being a fine-looking fellow for his years, above all, he was exceedingly industrious. These numerous good qualities won for him interest also in the eyes of another member of the Mountjoy family who has not yet been named, viz., Mary, the sole child of Christopher and Madame Mountjoy. She seems to have been a beautiful girl, of a gentle, loving nature, to whom the *ne plus ultra* of earthly happiness appeared marriage with Stephen Bellott, alongside whom she had laboured, during six long years, in the work-room of the Mountjoys' tiring establishment.

At last Stephen was pronounced a full-fledged master-wigmaker and tiring-master, and after a trip to Spain, he returned home to settle down to work at his trade. By this time, father and mother Mountjoy had seen how matters stood as regards their daughter, viz., that her heart was wholly given to Stephen Bellott.

Whether from bashfulness or caution, the lad said not a word to his lady-love. How was he to be instigated to make poor Mary's life happy? Doubtless Madame Mountjoy had often spoken to William Shakespeare about the little family romance ripening before him. Now, however, she approached him with a formal request that he would intervene in the matter. After laying all the facts before him, she begged him to speak to Stephen Bellott, and tell him, as though from himself, that he was certain "if he

asked Mary Mountjoy to be his wife she would accept him."

The heart of the world's greatest dramatist, for gentleness and amiability, was as that of a little child. He accepted the office of go-between, and laid the whole facts of the case before Stephen. The latter was more than inclined for the match. There and then he seems to have asked Mary to become his wife, and she consented. They were accordingly married, as the parish register of St. Olave's Street testifies, on 19th November 1604.

As Professor Wallace aptly adds, "Here Shakespeare's part in the affair should properly have ended." Seven and a half years after the marriage, however (viz., in May 1612), he was compelled by legal summons to repair to the Court of Chancery to testify to the share he had taken in bringing about the marriage. It appears that Stephen Bellott did not believe that his father-in-law, Christopher Mountjoy, was treating him fairly (1) as regards the payment of the dowry the bridegroom was to receive with his bride, and (2) with reference to the amount of maintenance the Bellotts were to receive, and the contributions they were to make, to the upkeep of the household.

We need not concern ourselves with the end of the matter, inconclusive as it was, for we have no further Shakespeare facts furnished us in the evidence. The circumstance stands out clearly and unmistakably, however, that William Shakespeare actually appeared in court in connection with this affair, that he showed a deep and a tender solicitude for the welfare of Mary Mountjoy, that he did what he could to bring her love-epos to a satisfactory termination, and that he seemingly remained an intimate friend of the Mountjoys during all the period of his residence in London.

From a careful study of the facts of the case, I am disposed to think Shakespeare resided with the Mountjoys as long as he lived there. The locality was one

frequented by literary and dramatic people. Not far distant was St. Giles, Cripplegate, where Thomas Dekker, Anthony Munday, Ben Jonson, Nat Field, and others, all lived, while Bread Street, Cheapside, along which he would pass (as Professor Wallace says) on his way to the "Globe," contained the house where John Milton was born in 1608 (eight years before Shakespeare's death) and where also he spent the early years of childhood.

The locality, accordingly, was dear to Shakespeare, because here his friends and theatrical associates resided around him. If we accept the date 1598, therefore, as that on which he went to live with the Mountjoys, in their dwelling at the corner of Monkwell and Silver Streets, some of his most notable works would be composed at that place, to wit, the *Merry Wives of Windsor, Henry V., Much Ado about Nothing, As You Like It, Twelfth Night, Julius Cæsar, Hamlet, Troilus and Cressida, Othello, Measure for Measure, Macbeth, King Lear, Timon of Athens, Antony and Cleopatra, Coriolanus, Cymbeline, Winter's Tale, The Tempest, Henry VIII.* From the Mountjoys he would be able to procure those tags of colloquial French which are used with such telling effect in *Henry V.*, while the name of the Huguenot refugee itself figures as that of the French herald.

The cumulative weight of all these discoveries by Professor Wallace is to give us a new idea of "Shakespeare the Man" as distinct from "Shakespeare the Poet." It may be well to note here that in 1594-5 *King John*, the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *The Merchant of Venice*, also in 1595-6 *All's Well that Ends Well*, and *The Taming of the Shrew*, all were written—a goodly tale of work.

In August 1596, Shakespeare underwent severe affliction in the death of his only son, Hamnet, who was interred in Stratford Church, Shakespeare doubtless being present at the funeral. The blow was severe,

for with the death of the lad disappeared for ever all hope, on the part of Shakespeare, of founding a family.

In this same year, instigated probably by his great son, John Shakespeare made application for a coat-of-arms to the Heralds' College. The draft of the grant proposed to be given to Shakespeare in response to this application is still extant at the "College of Arms." After the usual preamble, the document proceeds to state that the Garter-King of Arms (William Dethick)• "being by credible report informed that John Shakespeare, of Stratford-upon-Avon in the County of Warwick, whose parents and late antecessors were for their valiant and faithful service advanced and rewarded by the most prudent prince, King Henry the Seventh of famous memorie, sithence which time they have continued at these parts in good reputation and credit; and that the said John, having married Mary, daughter and one of the heirs of Robert Arden of Wilmcote, in the said county, gent, In consideration, whereof, and for the encouragement of his posterity, to whom these achievements might descend by the ancient custom and laws of arms, I have therefore assigned, granted, and by these presents confirmed this shield or coat of arms, viz.—gold, on a bend *sable*, a spear of the first, the point *steeled*, proper, and for his crest or cognisance, a falcon his wings displayed argent, standing on a wreath of his colours, supporting a spear, gold steeled, as aforesaid, set upon a helmet with mantles and tassels as hath been accustomed, and more plainly appeareth depicted on this margent."

On the margin are executed the arms and the crest with the motto "*Non sanz droict.*"

The application, for some reason, was not executed that year. Some critics have imagined that the cause may be sought in Shakespeare's profession. That would have been no bar, however, as more than one of

Shakespeare's fellow-actors had already secured coats-of-arms.

In the following year (1597) Shakespeare had taken openly, in his own person, a more effective step than applying for a coat-of-arms, to rehabilitate himself and his family in the eyes of his fellow-townsmen. He purchased "New Place," one of the largest and best houses in Stratford, and immediately set about getting it repaired and put into excellent order. Erected rather more than a century previous by Sir Hugh Clopton, it had long been tenantless, and therefore had fallen into disrepair. With two barns and two gardens, the price paid was £60, about £480 in our money of to-day. Though he purchased the house and adorned it, planting many of the trees in the garden, he did not permanently reside in the mansion until the year 1611. To his kinsman and legal adviser, Thomas Greene, or Shakespeare, he leased the house, and the latter regularly occupied it.

This year witnessed another testimony to the reviving condition of the Shakespeare fortunes in Stratford. For years John Shakespeare had been under a cloud, unable to meet his engagements in full, and constantly pleading poverty as an excuse for claiming exemption from local dues and levies. Now, however, all that was changed. He satisfied his creditors in full, and then in the autumn of 1597, along with his wife Mary, John Shakespeare filed a bill in Chancery against his kinsman, John Lambert, for the recovery of Asbies, the estate which Shakespeare's mother had brought as her dowry. After the case had dragged on for two years, no decree was recorded, which Mr. Halliwell Phillipps considered lent colour to the supposition either that the plaintiffs had retired from the contest, or that there had been a compromise in favour of the possessor of the land by the defendants.

In 1597, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Richard II.*, and *Richard III.* were all either surreptitiously or anony-

mously published. At Christmas of the same year, Elizabeth held her Court at Whitehall, and among the dramas then performed was Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost*, newly corrected and augmented. That this revival was more than ordinarily successful, is proved by the fact that the drama was mentioned by both Tofte and Meres in 1598, and finally was published early in that year. Robert Tofte, whose *Month's Mind of a Melancholy Lover* appeared early in that year, had this allusion to the piece—

> "*Love's Labour Lost*, I once did see a play,
> Y-clepèd so, so callèd to my pain."

The chief reference, however, to Shakespeare and his work during 1598 occurs in the *Palladis Tamia: Wit's Treasury, being the Second Part of the Wit's Commonwealth*. In this tract Francis Meres compares the literature of his age and land with that of Greece and Rome. To Shakespeare he refers in the following terms [1]—

"As the Greek tongue is made famous and eloquent by Homer, Hesiod, Euripides, Æschylus, Sophocles, Pindarus, Phocylides and Aristophanes; and the Latin tongue by Virgil, Ovid, Horace, Silius Italicus, Lucanus, Lucretius, Ausonius and Claudianus, so the English tongue is mightily enriched and gorgeously invested in rare ornaments and resplendent habiliments by Sir Philip Sidney, Spenser, Daniel, Drayton, Warner, Shakespeare, Marlowe and Chapman.

"As the soul of Euphorbus was thought to live in Pythagoras, so the sweet witty soul of Ovid lives in mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakespeare: Witness his *Venus and Adonis*, his *Lucrece*, his Sugared Sonnets among his private friends.

"As Plautus and Seneca are accounted the best for Comedy and Tragedy among the Latins, so Shakespeare among the English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage. For Comedy witness his *Gentlemen of Verona*, his *Errors*, his *Love's Labour's Lost*, his *Love's Labour's Won*, *All's Well that Ends Well*, his *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and his *Merchant of Venice*.

"For Tragedy, his *Richard II.*, *Richard III.*, *Henry IV.*, *King John*, *Titus Andronicus*, and his *Romeo and Juliet*.

"As Epius Stolo said that the Muses would speak with Plautus'

[1] *Cf.* the "Palladis Tamia" as published in *An English Garner—Critical Essays and Literary Fragments*, edited by Prof. J. Churton Collins.

tongue if they would speak Latin, so I say that the Muses would speak with Shakespeare's fine filed phrase if they would speak English."

So also for lyric poetry, tragic and comic poetry, Shakespeare is mentioned with conspicuous commendation.

This same year saw the testimony of Richard Barnfield[1] to the varied nature of the pleasure-giving elements in Shakespeare's work, and to his wide popularity. In his poem, "A Remembrance of some English Poets," contained in *Poems in Divers Humours*, he thus speaks of Shakespeare—

> "And Shakespeare, thou, whose honey-flowing vein
> (Pleasing the world), thy praises doth obtain,
> Whose *Venus* and whose *Lucrece* (sweet and chaste)
> Thy name in Fame's immortal Book have placed,
> Live ever you, at least in Fame live ever;
> Well may the Body die, but Fame dies never."

In 1597 the two parts of *Henry IV.* were written, followed in 1598 by the *Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Henry V.* The *Merry Wives* may be dated either late in 1597 or early in 1598. It follows *Henry IV.*, tradition relating, as I have already stated, that Elizabeth being so delighted with "Falstaff," desired to see him in love. The play was written, according to report, in fourteen days.

Henslow's *Diary* gives us at this time some interesting information as to the current price of dramatic work. It appears from that source, that by four companies alone, out of the ten then in existence, more than one hundred different plays were produced between the years 1591 to 1597. There were many play-cobblers at work, and we learn that Thomas Dekker received twenty shillings (£8) for making additions to Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*. The price usually paid by managers for a new play was about twenty nobles, or six pounds twelve shillings and six-

[1] See Barnfield's Works in the late Dr. Grosart's *Occasional Issues of Rare Books.*

pence, in consideration of which the author sold out all rights in the play. If, as sometimes happened, the play was not absolutely purchased by the theatre, the author received as his remuneration, the profits of a third night's representation, with the products of the sale of the play at sixpence per copy, and the usual fee of forty shillings, given by a patron in return for an adulatory dedication.

During these two years (1597-8) Francis Bacon issued the first edition of his *Essays;* Joseph Hall his *Virgidemiarum*, a volume of satires; Alexander Montgomery, the Scottish poet, published *The Cherry and the Slae;* and William Hunnis, the religious poet, his *Hive full of Honey*. John Stow meantime had given to the public his valuable topographical work, *The Survey of London;* John Florio the first Italian dictionary, *A World of Words*, while a translation of Linschoten's *Voyage to the East Indies* was published in 1598, containing that many-lined map to which Shakespeare makes Maria compare the face of Malvolio in *Twelfth Night* (III. ii. 78).

This year the tragi-comedy, *A Looking-Glass for England and London*, the work of Thomas Lodge and Robert Greene, was printed, also George Chapman's first play, *The Blind Beggar of Alexandria;* Ben Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour* was produced in the September of the same year by Shakespeare's company (the Lord Chamberlain's men), the poet himself being instrumental in securing its acceptance when it was on the eve of being rejected.[1] Shakespeare, moreover, took part in the representation of the piece.

In this year also Sir Thomas Bodley founded and endowed that noble library at Oxford, named after himself, the Bodleian: while towards the close of it, a "ruined, broken-hearted man"[2] reached London from Ireland, scarcely recognisable as the celebrated

[1] Rowe's *Life of Shakespeare.*
[2] Dean Church's *Spenser* (English Men of Letters), p. 178.

poet, Edmund Spenser. He had been appointed Clerk of the Council of Munster, and had been recommended by the Queen for the Shrievalty of Cork, but in October was obliged to flee before the oppressed Irish of Munster, who plundered and burned the poet's castle of Kilcolman, one of his children perishing in the flames. He returned to England to die of a broken heart three months later, in King Street, Westminster.

To this year must be ascribed certain letters, two of them referring to Shakespeare, and the third addressed to him. The first of these was written by Abraham Sturley, a native of Stratford, and formerly bailiff there to a relative in London, in which the writer says—

"This is one special remembrance from our father's motion. It seemeth by him that our countryman, Mr. Shakespeare, is willing to disburse some money upon some odd yardland or other at Shottery or near about us. He thinketh it a very fit pattern to move him to deal in the matter of our tithes."

The second letter is from the same correspondent to Richard Quiney, the father of Shakespeare's future son-in-law, who was then in London trying to relieve Stratford from the payment of a subsidy, in consequence of the great dearth of corn. Sturley writes that Quiney had remarked in his letter of 25th October "that our countryman, Mr. William Shakespeare, would procure us money, which I like, as I shall hear, when and where and how."

The third letter is from Richard Quiney himself to Shakespeare (the MS. of this letter being still extant), addressed "to my loving good friend and countryman Mr. Wm. Shakespeare," whereof the following is the text—

"Loveinge Countryman, I am bold of yow as of a ffrende craveinge yowr helpe with xxx*l*. Upon Mr. Bushells and my securytee, or Mr. Mytton's with me. Mr. Rosswell is nott come to London as yeate and I have especial cawse. Yow shall ffrende me muche in helpeing me out of all debettes I owe in London, I thancke God, and much quiet my mynde, which wolde not be indebted. I

am nowe towardes the Cowrte, in hope of answer for the dispatche of my buyseness. Yow shall nether loase creddyt nor monney by me, the Lord wyllinge; and nowe butt perswade yowrselfe soe, as I hope, and yow shall nott need to feare, butt with all hearte thanckfullenes, I will holde my tyme, and content yowre ffrende, and yf we bargaine farther, yow shal be the paiemaster yowrself. My tyme biddes me hestene to an ende, and soe I commith thys [to] yowr care and hope of yowr helpe. I feare I shall nott be backe thys night ffrom the Cowrte. Haste. The Lorde be with yow and with us all, Amen! Ffrom the Bell in Carter Lane, the 25 of October 1598. Yowrs in all kyndeness—RIC QUINEY."

In this year, moreover, the Burbages pulled down the old house, "The Theatre," wherein the Lord Chamberlain's men had acted so long, and from the materials erected the "Globe" on the Bankside, joining to themselves, as we learn from the document discovered by Halliwell Phillipps in the Lord Chamberlain's office, "those deserving men, Shakespeare, Heminge, Condell, Phillips, and others, partners in the profits of that they call the house." This meant that Shakespeare and the others received half the daily profits from certain seats in the theatre, not that the dramatist was an actual shareholder in the "Globe."

In 1599 Shakespeare was engaged upon *Much Ado about Nothing* and *As You Like It*. *Henry V.*, written the previous year, was repeatedly played this year, and in the Prologue added to Act V. he referred to Essex's expedition to Ireland to suppress Tyrone's revolt in terms of high expectation of the success to be achieved. Shakespeare's friend and patron, Southampton, was with Essex in this mysterious affair, and our poet therefore felt in honour bound to support the former as far as possible.

When the Earl of Essex did come, it was without leave, and as a man, if not then disgraced, on the very eve of being so, and of being impeached for neglect of the duties entrusted to him.[1]

[1] *Cf.* Sidney Lee's *Life of Shakespeare*, pp. 189, 453; Wyndham's *Poems of Shakespeare*, Introduction.

This year the application by John Shakespeare to the College of Heralds for a coat-of-arms met with more success, and after some little delay the necessary permission was granted.

Another interesting fact associated with this year was the publication of the series of poems called *The Passionate Pilgrim* by a piratical publisher, named William Jaggard, Shakespeare's name being affixed to the production. Among the poems so issued, Nos. i. ii., were two of the "Sugared Sonnets among his private friends," which now stand among his Sonnets as Nos. cxxxviii. and cxliv., "When my love swears that she is made of truth" and "Two loves I have of comfort and despair." To Jaggard, Shakespeare must in some way have communicated his sense of annoyance at this unwarrantable liberty taken with his name, for in future editions the words "by William Shakespeare" were omitted.

In 1599, Jonson's second play, *Every Man out of his Humour*, was performed at the "Globe," but Shakespeare took no part in the production, not approving, possibly, of the personalities which disfigured the piece and initiated the "War of the Actors." Jonson, during the October of this year, has three comedies, *The Alchemist*, *The Silent Woman*, and *Volpone*, also his tragedy of *Sejanus*, all entered on the Stationers' Register for publication, showing that for years he must have been engaged on dramatic composition without being able to obtain a hearing. During the same year George Peele's sacred drama of *King David and Fair Bethsabe*, with his tragedy of *Absalom*, also Chapman's drama *All Fools*, were all printed; John Marston's volume of satires, *The Scourge of Villainie*, was also published, the tenth satire containing the following reference to Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*—

> "Luscus, what's played to-night? I'faith, now I know.
> I see thy lips abroach from whence doth flow
> Nought but pure 'Juliet and Romeo.'"

In November of this year, a company of English actors under the leadership of Laurence Fletcher visited Scotland, and were warmly welcomed by James VI. That Shakespeare formed one of that company has often been asserted. Though no evidence exists to prove that he ever crossed the Border, one cannot believe that any man could describe with such absolute accuracy the scenery of "Macbeth's Castle," and have caught the correct metrical assonance when using such words as "Dunsinane," where the accent—as the word was pronounced in Scotland at that time—falls on the last syllable and not on the penultimate, as at times it has been pronounced, unless he had visited the scene. The facts in *Macbeth* are not all given in Holinshed, and certainly Shakespeare did not borrow from the chronicler the marvellous local atmosphere wherein the play is enveloped.[1]

The year 1600 is notable for the number of Shakespearian plays that were printed, these being the Second Part of *Henry IV.*; *Much Ado about Nothing*; *Henry V.*; *Henry VI.* (Parts II. and III.); *Titus Andronicus*; *The Merchant of Venice*; two Quarto editions of the *Midsummer Night's Dream*; while an undated edition of *As You Like It* was entered at Stationers' Hall, but did not appear.

Shakespeare was at this time busy with *Twelfth Night*, and in revising certain of his dramas, notably *Henry V.* A play on the subject of "Sir John Oldcastle" was at this time issued with Shakespeare's name as author, but obviously he had little or nothing to do with the work.

In 1601, we have the sad circumstances of the Essex rebellion, in which Shakespeare's patron, Southampton, was concerned, and indirectly Shakespeare himself, through the agony he endured over his friend's im-

[1] *Shakespeare in Scotland. Cf.* Charles Knight's *Life of Shakespeare* and his edition of *Macbeth.*

prisonment. We have already noted the circumstances at length in connection with the play of *Richard II.*, which was performed on 5th February 1601 (*see* p. 124), and can only summarise them now. February 8th of the same year was fixed as the date for the Essex rebellion to commence, but the rising proved an utter fiasco, revealing the fact that Essex and his friends had wholly misunderstood the mind of the people. Both Essex and Southampton were arrested, tried, and found guilty, being condemned to death. Upon the former the capital sentence was carried into effect on 25th February, while Southampton's sentence was altered to imprisonment for life. He was, however, pardoned and set at liberty by James I. on his accession in 1603.

In September of this year Shakespeare was again called upon to suffer sorrow in the death of his father, John Shakespeare. The poet's sorrow for his death was undoubtedly deep and sincere. At the Christmas celebrations of this year, the *Return from Parnassus* was played by the students of St. John's College, Cambridge, and, in the third part of the trilogy, Kemp and Burbage, introduced by name, are represented as saying—

"*Kempe* :—Few of the University pen plays well: they smell too much of that writer Ovid, and that writer Metamorphosis, and talk too much of Proserpina and Jupiter. Why here's our fellow Shakespeare puts them all down, ay and Ben Jonson too. O that Ben Jonson is a pestilent fellow: he brought up Horace giving the poets a pill, but our fellow Shakespeare hath given him a purge that made him bewray his credit.

"*Burbage* :—It's a shrewd fellow indeed."

Shakespeare's life, however, albeit he may have been drawn into the "War of the Players," was spent, as far as we know, in peacefully prosecuting his literary pursuits. The picture we obtain of him as impressed upon the mind's eye by the recent discoveries of Professor Wallace, is that of a gentle, affectionate, sympathetic nature, ready to do good to all, and find-

ing his reward in the regard and esteem of all those with whom he was brought into contact.

Shakespeare's poem beginning, "Let the bird of loudest lay" is this year published among the additional poems to Robert Chester's *Love's Martyr*, translated from the Italian of Torquato Coeliano.[1] To this year also belongs *Julius Cæsar*, one of the noblest of his tragedies.

Such, briefly summarised, are the facts of Shakespeare's life during his "Second Period of Development," viz., from 1594 to 1601.

[1] See Chester's "Love's Martyr" in Dr. Grosart's edition of the work—New Shakespeare Society, 1878.

CHAPTER VII

SHAKESPEARE'S SECOND PERIOD OF DEVELOPMENT (1594-1601)

SECTION I.—THE ERA AND ITS INFLUENCE

To the Second Period of Shakespeare's dramatic development we have now come, viz., "The Epoch of his Maturing Art," in other words, to that era of rapidly ripening powers when he was every day acquiring greater certainty and sureness of touch, more imperial sway over the resources of his rhythmic repertory, and laying up a more inexhaustible balance at his credit of the current verbal coin of the realm on which he was to draw with a prodigality that almost seemed spendthrift. In addition there had come to him a keener insight into man and his relations to his fellow-men and his Maker, with a more unerring perception of the ethical obligations and intellectual conditions which the mere fact of living in legally constituted societies entails upon us. The eye and hand, the sense and outlook, the brain and the fancy were all alike being disciplined to do their work with readiness as well as efficiency, though they had not yet attained that superlative skill and deftness that constituted Shakespeare the world's master-craftsman in imaginative art.

The epoch of his "Maturing Art" was, in other words, the period of the great "Comedies" and of the "Histories," that period of which Courthope says that in it "such a rapid succession of masterpieces has perhaps never been witnessed as in the period which saw the production of *The Merchant of Venice*,

As You Like It, Much Ado about Nothing, Twelfth Night, the two parts of *Henry IV.*, and *King Henry V.* Whatever is crude and tentative in the poet's earlier performances disappears in these plays. The action seems of itself to reveal the depth of the philosophy, and the philosophy to illuminate the large extent of the action. The characters no longer introduced for the mere amusement of the spectators are all seen to be necessary for the evolution of the play." [1]

While studying the plays of this period, let the fact be kept prominently in remembrance that although the life and reign of the Queen—who was in herself at once the inspiration and the integration of the age—were coming to a close, her mysterious influence and her propulsive power towards national greatness remained undiminished even to the end. Her Gloriana-like greatness did not spring so much from any actual qualities in the woman, varied and vast though her abilities were, as from something out of herself, viz., that sublimated ideal of national greatness, which the semi-fortuitous, semi-conscious consensus of the feelings and aspirations of the time had evolved. Of that ideal, her people, viewing her through the roseate haze of idolatrous affection, believed her to be the mystical incarnation.

Womanhood always exercises influence for good or for evil, and this feeling was the inspiration which made the work of the Elizabethan period so unspeakably fascinating; nay further, it was the realisation of the change pending when James I. came to the throne, with his contemptible personality, his secret vices, his selfish ideals, and his low moral outlook that struck the joyousness out of Shakespeare's soul. Patriot as he was, he saw a coward and a mouthing charlatan on that throne which Elizabeth had ennobled. To him, of a truth, the glory and the grandeur of England's romantic dreams seemed to pass away for ever with

[1] Courthope, *History of English Poetry*, vol. iv. p. 104.

the accession of James Stuart, though to himself personally the change promised increase of honour and of influence, as the new King was his friend. Shakespeare, however, was a patriot, not a mere place-seeker. Therefore, we have the darkened outlook, semi-satirical where it was not semi-despairing, of *Hamlet*, of *Troilus and Cressida*, of *Othello*, of *Measure for Measure*, of *Macbeth*, and of *King Lear*.

The characteristics of the Second Period are greater wealth of imagination, synchronising with greater restrained power and self-control: increasing closeness and cogency of thought and reasoning: growing proficiency in effective and clear-cut characterisation, and a more accurate realisation of standard value in the currency of words. Formerly, he had dealt largely in type-characters, otherwise in *dramatis personæ*, representative of outstanding qualities that were writ large over their personality; now, he created men and women representative of no time yet of all time, of no specially distinctive or outstanding qualities typical of rank, but potentially of all qualities requisite for the station they were required to fill.

So much for internal evidences; now as to external. In this period, rhyme is less frequent (but by no means disappears), in such arrangements as rhyming couplets and quatrains; there is a decided decrease in doggerel verse, particularly in those doggerel couplets or rhyme-tags which, in the plays of the First Period, so frequently closed a scene. Feminine or double endings, also light endings and weak endings, show a tendency to increase, while the unstopped line (or *enjambement*) becomes increasingly frequent. Classical allusion is less glaringly prominent, while puns and conceits of a trivial character are greatly reduced in number. Finally, the wit reveals more of the true attic salt of satire, irony, and ridicule, while the humour becomes more profound and universal in its quality.

These attributes of his Second Period all go to show that Shakespeare was steadily gaining skill in his craft, besides realising that not by merely tickling the ears of the groundlings, in which so many of his contemporaries indulged, would he scale the heights of true dramatic success, but by infusing into his plays more of that catholic quality of cosmopolitan human sympathy that makes all mankind akin, despite the prejudices aroused by creed, colour, or custom.

SECTION 2.—KING JOHN. 1594

King John was the earliest play of Shakespeare's Second Period. Though ranked among the "Histories" in the typical division of his works, in reality it approximates least, of all his historical plays, to that idea of representing the annals of England in dramatic form, which seems to have had place in our poet's mind. The view of "history" taken here is rather an interweaving of one or two positive facts of outstanding interest—even they, however, often coloured to some extent by his own predilections—with a large number of romantic incidents, semi-historic, traditional, and purely imaginative. That, rather than a careful survey and summary of the undoubted historic occurrences of the earlier years of the eventful thirteenth century, is the view of dramatic-history writing revealed in this play of *King John*. Though not a member of any of the Shakespearian history-cycles, the suggestion seems at least possible that, in this drama, the writer was initiating a new cycle of Plantagenet plays.

The date of composition seems, from many considerations, to have been about 1594. There was already a play in existence on the same subject, entitled *The Troublesome Reign of King John*. Manifesting, as it does, the influence of Marlowe in its declamatory rhetoric, yet its easy blank verse, that

earlier play cannot be dated, as regards its composition, later than 1587-8, for it was printed in 1591, and then had been some years before the public. Shakespeare's *King John* was certainly written subsequent to the completion of *Richard II.*, with which it has many points of affinity; while as certainly it was completed prior to the commencement of *Henry V.*, the Bastard Faulconbridge, that noble portrait of a great and a glorious soldier-patriot, being an earlier study, on the same lines, as the hero-king. For these reasons, then, we are inclined to date the play as written in 1594.

It was not issued in Quarto, its earliest appearance in print being in the first Folio edition of 1623, where it takes pride of place amongst the "Histories." This position it receives from the fact that the plays in the Folio are arranged in strict chronological order. *King John*, therefore, by right stands first.

That its place was among the earlier dramas of Shakespeare's Second Period is likewise evinced by these metrical considerations: (*a*) the entire absence of prose from the play. This of itself is a weighty argument, as the rule holds regarding this period with reasonable though by no means absolute regularity, that the greater the amount of prose in a play the later that play is in date; (*b*) the diminution of rhyme, there being, out of the 2553 lines in the play, only a little over 150 rhyming couplets, quatrains, and sestets. This fact also indicates a steady advance from the early period, where rhyme predominates; (*c*) the number of short lines increases, as also does that of Alexandrines; (*d*) there is, however, a decided decrease of feminine or double endings, the percentage registered being only 6.3: the percentage of light and weak endings together being also correspondingly low, there being only seven of the former and none of the latter. Doggerel lines are, however, disappearing, run-on lines register a percentage of 17.7, while the

results from the speech-ending test give us 12.7 per cent. The testimony of the metrical tests with regard to *King John* therefore is somewhat confusing and unreliable. The play is mentioned by Meres in *Palladis Tamia* (1598) as being then in existence and popular.

The sources whence the drama is drawn are not far to seek. They are wholly to be found in the older play, of which the full title reveals the extent of its historico-dramatic outlook: *The Troublesome Raigne of John, King of England, with the Discoverie of King Richard Cordelions Base Sonne (vulgarly named The Bastard Fawconbridge) also the death of King John at Swinstead Abbey. As it was (sundry times) publikely acted by the Queenes Majesties Players, in the Honourable Citie of London. Imprinted at London for Sampson Clarke and are to be solde at his shop on the backe-side of the Royal Exchange* 1591. Possibly Lodge and Greene were the joint authors, as haunting reminiscences of the verse of both are suggested by particular lines in the older play.

If certain passages from *The Troublesome Raigne* are compared with others from Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, some curious similarities in thought and diction will be detected by the student.

The Troublesome Raigne was the source whence Shakespeare drew his materials for *King John*. Though he has followed his original with a fidelity bordering on scrupulosity, act by act, and scene by scene, yet he is by no means a mere slavish reproducer. By the subtle solvent of his own fancy, he transmutes, in the alembic of his genius, what is often the dull lead of the source whence he drew his facts, into the glistening ore of his own play. The older drama is based on Holinshed and, in a minor degree, on John Bale's *Kynge Johan*, but there is no evidence in *King John* that Shakespeare saw either the one or the other.

The scene of the action of the play is laid sometimes in England and sometimes in France, Act I. being laid

at Northampton; Acts II. and III. in France before the walls of Angiers; Act IV. at Northampton; Act V. Sc. i. at Northampton; Sc. ii.-v. near Edmundsbury, where the battle took place; Sc. vi. near Swinstead Abbey; Sc. vii. in the orchard of the Abbey in question.

The time-analysis of the play gives for the duration of the action seven days with intervals, comprising in all from three to four months, and distributed as follows—

Day	I.	embracing	Act	I.	Sc.	i.; Interval.
,,	II.	,,	,,	II.	,,	i.-ii.; III. i.-iii.
,,	III.	,,	,,	III.	,,	iv.; Interval.
,,	IV.	,,	,,	IV.	,,	i.-iii.; Interval.
,,	V.	,,	,,	V.	,,	i.; Interval.
,,	VI.	,,	,,	V.	,,	ii.-v.
,,	VII.	,,	,,	V.	,,	vi.-vii.

The historic time embraces the entire reign of John, 1199-1216.

The plot of *King John* need not be detailed at any great length. Suffice to say that in the first act there is the defiance of France with regard to the disputed throne of England. After Richard Cœur de Lion's death, by reason of a testament of the late monarch, and at the instigation of the Queen-Mother Elinor (widow of Henry II.), young Arthur of Bretagne is excluded from the throne, and Richard's brother, John, succeeds. Elinor is represented as the evil genius of England, who, during the life of her husband, had stirred up enmity between father and sons, and now plays the same part between Richard and John on the one side, and Arthur on the other. She has wormed herself into her son John's confidence, until now she has become his political genius and guide. John's succession (as Gervinus puts it) "serves her ambition and gratifies her hatred of Arthur's mother, Constance, who according to Elinor sought on her side the throne for her son, only with the ambitious design of ruling herself and kindling all the world." To

Constance and her supporters John is a usurper. The latter at first, in opposition to his mother, seems to place confidence in his " right " as much as in " his strong possession." Elinor, however, puts him right by whispering that his throne rests more on strong possession than on right. France and Austria now take the part of Arthur and Constance, declaring they will never retire until justice has been done to the former. Suddenly the proposal of a compromise is brought forward, viz., that the Dauphin Lewis should marry Blanche, who is " niece to England," and so let the provinces that are in dispute pass again to France as dower. This is regarded as a capital expedient. Arthur and his rights are forgotten, and all his champions, ignoring his claims, hasten to the wedding. But the marriage introduces elements of discord. The wretched Constance invokes the curse of Heaven on the union. For his plunder of the Church, John is threatened with excommunication by Cardinal Pandulph. He refuses restitution and defies the Pope. For some time he persists in his defiance, until he sees that with France, Austria, and the Church supporting the cause of Arthur he is likely to lose all. He thereupon shamelessly submits to the Pope, the league between the latter, France, and Austria is broken up, Arthur falls into John's hands, and the game seems his.

Meantime, Arthur, driven to despair, commits suicide, and the nobles accusing John of the murder, abjure their fealty to him and invite aid from France. John thereupon yields his crown into Pandulph's hands, and receives it again from him in token that he admits the superiority of the Pope. This he does in order to obtain the assistance of the See of Rome against the rebellious nobles, and thus frustrating the invasion of England by the French. There is a fine conflict of wits, each party, French and English, trying to get the better of the other. The French and

the English swear a league before the altar at Bury St. Edmunds. Suddenly, when the battle is half won by the allies, the English nobles learn that the French had secretly sworn that even should the battle be won, the rebellious nobles should not be allowed to live, since the traitors to one king could not be trusted to be true to another. This intelligence causes the English nobles to once more change their side, and the conflict is decided in favour of the English King. But in the moment of his seeming triumph, John is poisoned by a priest, who sacrifices his own life that he might throw the King off his guard and effect his end. Thus the great moral of the play is driven home with startling force to all and sundry—

> —" Naught shall make us rue
> If England to itself do rest but true; "

or as the old chronicler Hall most concisely put it, " that all men more clearer than the sun, may apparently perceive, that as by discord great things decay and fall to ruin, so the same by concord be revived and erected."

The characters in *King John* do not for the most part deserve much said of them in the way of analysis. Prince Henry of England, the Earls of Pembroke, Essex, and Salisbury, Lord Bigot, Lewis the French Dauphin, Lymoges, Duke of Austria, Melun, Chatillon and others are little more than undeveloped outlines. They play their part sufficiently well to do all that is required of them in a dramatic sense to advance the action of the piece. That is all, however, and, their duty discharged, they glide back to the limbo of obscurity whence they had been summoned by the spell of the Master-Magician.

Of those that are left, what a glorious unity in diversity binds them together! The French King, Philip Augustus of Valois, is represented as a noble, generous nature, caught in the meshes of a network

of political expediency. Naturally straightforward, he has to bend to crooked policy for State reasons, urged thereto by his Machiavellian-minded son, the Dauphin, who though a shadowy figure all through, makes for tortuosity of purpose from first to last.

The supreme master of Mephistophelic double-mindedness, however, the smooth-tongued diplomatist and juggler with words, the subtle brain that moved the pawns upon the board of life, was Pandulph, the Cardinal and Papal Legate. His sole desire is out of national confusion and international conflicts to strengthen the power of the Papacy, and to make her the supreme arbiter, the last Court of Appeal in Europe. A crafty, far-seeing ecclesiastic, too cunning to quarrel, too keen for the aggrandisement of Mother Church to have any friends, he has one absorbing passion—the acquisition of power to be used for ecclesiastical ends. A baleful, terrible figure, he is one of Shakespeare's most impressive creations.

In opposition to him let us look at the one man he dreads, the brave, heroic, noble-minded Faulconbridge, surnamed the "Bastard," whose patriotism is so unselfish, who is willing to undergo the loss of all but honour for England's sake. How keenly sarcastic can he be when unmasking hypocrisy, how bitingly ironic when he exposes the tortuous tracks of Pandulph! He is the one humorous character in the play, and his wit is rather the result of the startling incongruities he is able to point out between the precepts and the practices of others, than due to any brilliant verbal fence or ridicule heaped on others. Dowden praises the boisterous but genuine and hearty patriotism of Faulconbridge as one of the few "presences" of human virtue or beauty which are to be perceived in the degenerate world depicted in *King John!* Gervinus, too, declares that "Faulconbridge is carried through all the national disturbances by his upright, patriotic spirit, his sound understanding, and an acute moral

instinct of not too tender a texture. His is that kind of nature best qualified for unerring steering through a stormy and dangerous sea."

Arthur moves through the play like a fair vision of gentleness and innocence. He hates no man, though many hate him, and his strongest shield is his gentle courtesy. To the rough soul of Hubert de Burgh, sent to deprive him of eyesight, he appeared as an angel from heaven, whom to injure would be dangerous. Therefore, despite the danger to which non-compliance with John's inhuman order implied for himself, De Burgh cries—

> "And, pretty child, sleep doubtless and secure,
> That Hubert for the wealth of all the world
> Will not offend thee."

Gervinus also says of him: "The young Arthur in his unspotted innocence is a stranger to this world of guilt and selfishness. . . . The superiority of a nature angelic, untried, and uninjured, drives the tender being early from the noisy world for which he has neither understanding nor heart."

Constance, his mother, is one of Shakespeare's most charming matrons. For her life is summed up in one word—Arthur! From the maternal side she appeals to us. On all others she is weak and hesitating. When, however, danger approaches Arthur, she rises like the lioness, wary and terrible, to strike at those who would injure him. If one of the noblest, she is also one of the saddest of Shakespeare's creations. In contrast with the hatefulness of Elinor, her portrait gathers beauty and dignity, and even in her indignation, burning and intense as it was, we love her, for it glowed in defence of her child.

And now what of John himself? The portrait is a pitiless analysis of the King's moral loathsomeness and utter lack of the most rudimentary traces of ethical principle. Though not without ability, to

John selfishness was both the master passion and the motive attribute of his nature. Whatsoever did not contribute to his own aggrandisement, to his own vile pleasures, was esteemed by him a political crime. He had a curiously inverted moral sense. On this point Mr. F. A. Marshall says: "Shakespeare could not bring himself to represent John as anything but a mean and detestable tyrant. All the King's bluster against the Pope goes for very little, when we find him a short time afterwards handing over his crown to the Pope's legate, and consenting to receive it from his hands as if from a suzerain. In fact, John is ready to submit to any degradation in order to obtain a powerful ally against his rebellious barons." But the John of the earlier acts is an altogether different character from the John of the later ones. Regarding this distinction, Gervinus remarks: "As he appears at the commencement of the play, he is like a vigorous man prepared for anything, resolved with a strong hand to defend his possession of the throne against every assault. . . . He is great in thought, not the image of a brutal tyrant, but only the type of the hard manly nature without any of the enamel of the finer feelings . . . severe and earnest, an enemy to cheerfulness and merry laughter, conversant with dark thoughts, of a restless, excited temperament, he quickly rises to daring resolves. In the later acts the King has forgotten his former vigour: he turns his hardened zeal against poor prophets only to benumb his superstitious fear; his energy is gone, and the Papal legate is his master."

No wonder such a man brought England to the verge of revolution. The wonder is that he survived Runnymede.

SECTION 3.—A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM. 1594

Shakespeare was unquestionably the greatest master of imaginative romance the world has yet seen, and his fairy world in this, the most charming of fairy "romances," is compact of mystical beauty and dreamy witchery. Styled a "dream" by its great creator, it could not have a better explanatory sub-title, for its likeness to reality is so complete that we never have any sense of incongruity, or of having, like children, "to pretend to believe certain things are other than what they seem that the illusion may go on."

In Tennyson's *Princess*, despite its ethereal beauty and charm, we can never rid ourselves of the consciousness that this is all "make-believe," though delicious "make-believe" throughout. But in Shakespeare's fairyland, situate though it be in "a wood near Athens," we wander hither and thither well content, paying no attention to the fact that we are in "topsyturvydom," but only desirous of seeing the final outcome of this general disjointment of things.

The play chronicles the high water-mark of Shakespeare's achievement in pure imagination. The *Tempest* is stronger in conception and of more finished workmanship as a work of art, but it cannot compare with the play now before us for sheer prodigality of imaginative wealth. "The Dream" in a word marks a decided advance upon anything Shakespeare had hitherto attempted. Of it Hallam writes: "The fairy machinery is one of the most beautiful conceptions that ever visited the mind of a poet; while the language is equally novel with the machinery; it sparkles in perpetual brightness with all the hues of the rainbow, yet there is nothing overcharged or affectedly ornamented."

The date of composition was almost certainly 1594. The year in question is stated by Dr. Forman in his

Diary, by Stow in his *Chronicle*, by Dr. King in his *Lectures on Jonas*, and by Churchyard in his *Charitie* (1595) as having been exceedingly cold and wet. In the present play Shakespeare makes similar allusions—

> " Contagious fogs; which, falling on the land,
> Have every pelting river made so proud,
> That they have overborne their continents:
> The ox hath therefore stretch'd his yoke in vain,
> The ploughman lost his sweat; and the green corn
> Hath rotted ere his youth attain'd a beard:
> The fold stands empty in the drowned field,
> And crows are fatted with the murrain flock." (II. ii. 31.)

Such a passage as the above was assuredly written while the sight or the accounts of the disaster were fresh on the poet's memory. There are also one or two other allusions which all help to fix the date as 1594. That the reference in the lines—

> " The thrice-three Muses mourning for the death
> Of learning late deceased in beggary,"

is to Greene, admits of little doubt. He died late in 1592, but his memory lived long after him. From the internal evidence of the play we believe it was composed in view of the marriage of some great noble. The Earl of Derby was married 24th January 1595,[1] and the Earl of Bedford about a fortnight later. The drama would be warmly welcomed at such a season. The play, moreover, makes allusion to Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, 1593; to Chute's *Cephalus and Procris*, 1593; to Marlowe and Nash's *Dido* in 1594; all references go to indicate that the play was written and produced in 1594. The production was in all probability on " Midsummer Day at night "—Midsummer Day being the festival of St. John, a day of merry-making and of popular observance, when pageants

[1] Lord Derby's marriage was celebrated at Court and was " most royally kept," as Stow says. Shakespeare's company had also been the servants of Stanley's elder brother until his death a few months before. Fleay, on the other hand, in his *Life of Shakespeare*, says that Shakespeare's company performed at Court on 5th January and 22nd February, but not on 24th January, the date of the marriage.

were performed and plays acted; while Midsummer Night was the witching time when fairies and hob-goblins, elves, and satyrs were abroad, ready to cast their unholy spells over all and sundry should timeous occasion offer.[1]

The argument as to date, drawn from the metrical characteristics of the play, also bears out the testimony of external evidence. All the metrical qualities of the drama favour the date named. Out of the 2251 lines constituting the total length of the piece, there are 441 lines of prose as against 405 in *Romeo and Juliet*. Then as regards blank verse as opposed to rhyme, we have 878 blank verse lines, and 731 rhyming couplets, quatrains, and sestets. With respect to feminine or double endings, there is present a slightly higher percentage than was the case in *King John*, viz., 7.3, with no light endings but one weak ending. The distinctively lyrical character of the play tended to promote exaltation of thought, with compression of language, such as would be rounded off by a deft craftsman in a line or a couplet, thus reducing the frequency wherewith the "run-on" line was used, and favouring the retention of the "end-stopped" line. The percentage of "run-on" lines in the play is 13.2, as against 17.7 in *King John*. There is, moreover, an increase in the introduction of doggerel lines, particularly at the end of scenes such as—

> "But herein mean I to enrich my pain,
> To have his sight thither and back again;"

or this—

> "And this the cranny is, right and sinister,
> Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper."

There is also an increase in unnecessary classical allusions, and in the use of trifling conceits—such qualities of style all going to prove the drama to

[1] *Folk-lore of Shakespeare*, by T. F. Thiselton-Dyer.

belong to the early part of Shakespeare's Second Period.

The sources whence the materials of the work were drawn are as follows:—(1) Plutarch's *Lives*, the account of Theseus in which collection supplies the whole of the Theseus-Hippolyta legend, in outline at least, and very much in the form in which it stands in the play. From Plutarch also Shakespeare took the names Egeus (or as it should be written, Ægeus), Ægle, Perigeneia, Ariadne, Antiopa. The suggestion to his mind of a play on the subject probably came from the opening lines of Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*, which relates the wedding of Theseus and Hippolyta with many of those accessorial details that appear in Shakespeare's play, such, for instance, as "the wood near Athens," "the May-morn hunt," "the conquest of Thebes," etc. Chaucer thus begins his tale—

> "Whylom, as olde stories tellen us,
> Ther was a duk that highte Theseus;
> Of Athenes he was lord and governour,
> And in his tyme swich a conquerour,
> That gretter was ther noon under the sonne.
> Ful many a riche contree hadde he wonne;
> What with his wisdom and his chivalrye,
> He conquered all the regne of Femenye,
> That whilom was ycleped Scithia;
> And weddede the quene Ipolita."

As Professor Herford says truly, none of Chaucer's "Tales" was more famous than this, for it had already been twice dramatised, once by Richard Edwards in *Palæmon and Arcyte* (1566) and again in a play *Palamon and Arcite* performed at the Rose Theatre, September 1594.[1] Shakespeare's Theseus is, however, a very different character from either Chaucer's battle-loving, bloodthirsty soldier, or from the amorous Lothario of Plutarch. He is a type of the great world ruler and

[1] Both plays are no longer extant. The latter, Prof. Herford suggests in his Introduction to the drama in the Eversley Shakespeare, may have been written in imitation of the *Midsummer Night's Dream.*

conqueror, generous in reaping the fruits of victory, and anxious to make those whom his splendid valour has overcome, sensible that, now warfare is over, he seeks to win their love as well as their submission and fealty.

From Golding's translation of Ovid (Book IV.), Shakespeare drew the myth of "Pyramus and Thisbe," perhaps consulting also Chaucer's *Legend of Thisbe of Babylon*, while in Clement Robinson's *Handefull of Pleasant Delites* (1584) he would probably note "A New Sonet of Pyramus and Thisbe," a marvel of inept alliteration, which he parodied. Then in the play itself, there are traceable distinct references to the romance of *Huon of Bordeaux*.[1] Oberon, King of the Fairies, as drawn by the author of *Huon* and by Shakespeare, are two very different characters, the former retaining all the qualities of the German Elf-King, irascibility, capriciousness, and readiness to take offence; the latter, a wise, far-seeing, just, and sympathetic ruler, eager to do good to mortals, though at the same time not averse to poking a little quiet fun at them.

Many of the details were probably invented by Shakespeare, and introduced into the play, but to the ancient romances he also owed much, such as the whole incident of "the little western flower," called by maidens "love-in-idleness," whereof the juice on sleeping eyelids laid, would make the man or woman so treated madly to dote on the first live creature encountered. This episode, with the consequences produced, only to be removed by another magical herb (for everything is possible in Elfland and must be believed) whose liquor had this virtuous property—

> "To take from thence all error with his might,
> And make his eyeballs roll with wonted sight."
> (III. ii. 360.)

To George of Montemayor, whose famous romance

[1] Translated by Lord Berners and published in 1534.

The Diana has been referred to more than once in this volume, these magical herbs were known, and it may have been from *The Diana* that the suggestion came to Shakespeare.

The mystic realms of Fairyland and Browniedom, the world of faun and satyr, of gnome and of pixy, of sprites and spirits, black, white, and grey, are all included in the marvellous domain of Shakespeare's imagination, unfolded during that memorable Midsummer Night to " Bully Bottom " when he had his " most rare vision. . . . a dream past the wit of man to say what dream it was."

Suffice to say that if ever man heard

> —" how thin and clear,
> And thinner, clearer, farther going.
> How sweet and far from hill and scar
> The horns of Elfland faintly blowing,"

it was Nick Bottom, the Weaver, on that mysterious Midsummer Night when he was wooed by Titania, Queen of the Fairies.

Before leaving the magic and the mystery present in the play, it might not be out of place to indicate that Shakespeare owed not a little of the glamour and witchery of his fairy scenes to the inspiration of Lyly's *Endymion*. The latter deals with the persistent attempt of the Earl of Leicester to marry Queen Elizabeth, and was based, to some extent at least, upon the gay scenes enacted at the festivities at Kenilworth Castle, when the Queen paid her historic visit to the princely home of the great Earl. That William Shakespeare was indebted to what he saw as a boy at the pageants of Kenilworth for much of the " realism-cum-mysticism " of this delightful drama has been argued by many critics, and the art of Lyly would still further tend to revive the memory of that magnificent and merry scene. That Shakespeare was indebted to both sources would not detract from the originality of the play.

The scene where the action of the drama was located is said to be "Athens and a wood near it." The only Athens, however, whereof Shakespeare had any cognisance, was the London of the sixteenth century, in which he lived, moved, and had his daily being. This then was the real *locale* of the play, the true place where the

> —"crew of patches, rude mechanicals
> That worked for bread upon Athenian stalls,"

were rehearsing "their most lamentable comedy"—that drama which is beyond all question the most delicious piece of "fantastical yet imaginative fooling" which we possess in English literature.

The various printed editions of the play comprise the two Quarto editions both issued in 1600, and entitled, *A Midsummer night's dreame, As it hath been sundry times publickely acted, by the Right honourable, the Lord Chamberlaine his servants. Written by William Shakespeare. Imprinted at London for Thomas Fisher and are to be soulde at his shoppe, at the signe of the White Harte in Fleetestreete*—1600. The other edition is similar in all respects, save that "James Roberts" stands for "Thomas Fisher" as printer. These have been named Q1 and Q2 (Quarto First and Quarto Second), but there is little difference between them.

The First Folio version of 1623 was printed from Q2, the variations being slight and unimportant, probably the result of careless press supervision.

The time action of the play covers three days, otherwise a day succeeded by a night and a day. The night of the second day is the season of Bully Bottom's marvellous "Dream," and occupies a little over one half of the play, to wit, Acts II., III., and IV. (Sc. i. 1-142). On the morrow, that is the morning of the third day, which by the way is "May Day," not "Midsummer Day," the reconciliation of the lovers takes place, Bottom awakes from his dream and

returns home, to the joy of his sorrowing fellow-players, and the performance of "the tedious-brief scene of young Pyramus and his love Thisbe, very tragical mirth," duly takes place, being, as Theseus declares with a delicate satiric euphemism, "very notably discharged."

The plot is rather the fortuitous concourse of five distinct threads of circumstance than any consecutive, well-articulated story. With supreme skill, these five threads are twisted together into one rope of narrative. Duke Theseus of Athens having wooed and won Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons, by his sword, desired the Athenian youth to stir themselves up to merriments and pageants against his nuptials four days later. This Theseus-Hippolyta legend is the first thread.

In obedience to this request, and to do honour to their Duke, a company of Athenian artisans determine to prepare a sort of farcical pageant on the subject of "Pyramus and Thisbe," and the tragical ending of their loves. This, then, is the second thread—the introduction of the Pyramus and Thisbe legend.

The third is represented by the two pairs of lovers and their inexplicable perplexities and misunderstandings, a theme probably suggested by Anthony Munday's *Two Italian Gentlemen*.

The fourth thread is supplied by the marvels wrought by the "little western flower, love-in-idleness," and its antidote, "Dian's bud," these, as I already have said, being perhaps borrowed from *The Diana* of George of Montemayor; while the fifth thread, the quarrel and reconciliation of Oberon and Titania, may have been suggested by the old romance of *Huon of Bordeaux*, but I believe was largely the result of Shakespeare's own knowledge of Warwickshire Elfland lore, gleaned while a boy amid the leafy lanes and glades of his native county. These five separate threads were with consummate artistic skill interwoven by Shakespeare into the bewitching

lyrico-romantic drama of *A Midsummer Night's Dream.*

The characters of the play are so numerous that a very brief reference to those worthy of notice must content the reader. Theseus is beyond question the leading personage in the drama. His character is cast in kingly mould. Exclusively a man of action, a maker and a moulder of history, he has little affinity to the poet or the thinker. Yet for all who take pains to please him and to do honour to his nuptials, he has a large-hearted sympathy—

> —" never anything can be amiss
> Where simpleness and duty tender it."

Of this character Stopford Brooke writes:[1] " Theseus and Hippolyta are children of the day, of clear reason, and practical life. . . . He is in love, but his love has no fantasy. Night he believes is the fairies' time, but he spends it in love or sleep. He turns in a moment from Hippolyta to the business of government, more important to him than love. His deep respect for Athenian law and precedent, his moderation and firmness in judgment, his support even though he pities Hermia, of paternal authority, all mark the man of the world and the statesman; the lucid reasoner, who has never been in the land of dreams. He does not believe the story of the night, yet can describe the poet and his work better than most. Nor could Shakespeare's noblest men speak with more of a royal nature than Theseus when he reasons on the homage offered to kings." He displays ever " the good manners of a gentleman, wise in experience as he is courteous in feeling, clear in reasoning."

Hippolyta is somewhat less royal and imperial in her ideas than her husband. She says little throughout the play, only thirteen speeches being assigned to her, yet her influence subtly pervades its action,

[1] *Ten Plays of Shakespeare*, p. 13.

owing to the habit of Theseus constantly to appeal to her. Love has made conquest of her, and her charm for us lies in the submissiveness wherewith the conquering Amazonian, whom defeat could not tame, bows her neck to the yoke of him who had made her love him by overcoming her in battle. The heroine is now lost in the woman, eager to surrender herself, after the nuptial knot has been tied, to the one man who has tamed her spirit.

Egeus is drawn with excellent skill as a pragmatical, opinionated old man, fond of the sound of his own tongue, while Lysander and Demetrius are representatives of opposite types of manhood, as Helena and Hermia are contrasted specimens of sweetly wayward womanhood. Of these four lovers, the celebrated German critic, Dr. H. Woelffel, says: "If we gather into one focus all the separate distinguishing traits of these characters, we shall find that in Lysander the poet wished to represent a noble nature sensitive to the charms of loveliness of soul and of spiritual beauty; but in Demetrius he has given us a nature fundamentally less noble, and sensitive only to the impression of physical beauty. Hermia hints of a charm which, born in heaven, outshines physical beauty, and is as unattainable to common perception as the sky to him who bends his eyes upon the earth; while Helena since the days of Homer and of Troy has been the symbol of the charm of earthly beauty." Of the four it has been further said by Schlegel and Kreyssig that: "Demetrius is the fiery and impulsive lover, ready to storm the maiden heart by all the more forceful amatory expedients, while Lysander is the cool, satiric, calculating Lothario, whose mind has taken account of every chance in the race of love, who will give away nothing, and is likely to win the race in the last few yards by some unexpected craft or *finesse*. Demetrius has more of the burly outspoken Englishman and of Warwickshire *bonhomie* in his nature, Lysander those

traits that go to the making of the subtle Italian or keen-witted Frenchman." Yet opposites attract (adds Hartley Coleridge), and it is the lively, vivacious, sharp-tongued Hermia that wins the love of the politic Lysander; while Helena, the placid yet deep-souled child of nature, is eventually the chosen of Demetrius. The truth of their love is sufficiently tested by untoward accidents, but by the kindly aid of Oberon, the twisted threads of fortune's skein are once more woven into their appointed design, and all ends happily, despite the protests of Egeus.

Of the artisans, "the rude mechanicals of the Athenian stalls" as they are called, they are no more representative Athenians than they are representative Turks. They are simply "English groundlings," such as the lower quarters of London could produce at any age from then till now. "Sweet Bully Bottom" in truth owns no other parentage than an honest Middlesex chawbacon. He and his fellows are perhaps a single rung of the social ladder above the Warwickshire clodhopper, inasmuch as they possess a glimmering of the dramatic instinct consequent upon their contact with the theatres. Bottom's companions are utterly destitute alike of separate individuality or differentiating traits either of mind or heart. Of Nick Bottom, however, such cannot be said. Hazlitt styles him "the most romantic of mechanics . . . one who follows a sedentary trade, and is accordingly represented as conceited, serious, and fantastical. He is ready to undertake anything and everything as if it were as much a matter of course as the motion of his loom and shuttle;" while Dr. Maginn adds: "Among his own companions he is the cock of the walk. His genius is admitted without hesitation. When he is lost in the wood, Quince gives up the play as marred; Flute declares he has the best wit of any handicraftsman in the city. It is no wonder that this perpetual flattery fills him with a most inordinate opinion of his

own powers. There is not a part in the play he cannot perform. True, Oberon designates him 'a hateful fool' and Puck 'the greatest blockhead of the set,' that the audience of wits and courtiers vote him an ass. What of that? He mixes not with them; he hears not their sarcasms, he could not understand their criticisms; and in the congenial company of the crew of patches and base mechanicals who admire him, lives happy in the fame of being *the* Nicholas Bottom, who by consent, to him universal, is voted to be *the* Pyramus, *the* prop of the stage, *the* sole support of the drama."

In Bottom and his companions, however, there is not a trace of the ironical wit of Speed, or the genial humour of Launce in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona.* The amusement they arouse is *at* them, not *with* them, is caused by their bumpkin-like blunders, while they carry the manners and customs of the stalls into the Duke's palace.

So much for the mortals. Now for the denizens of that "other world," which is neither of the heavens above, nor of the earth beneath, nor of the quarters under the earth. Whence came and whither go the fairies, the "good people," the elves, the gnomes, the sprites, in a word, the thousand and one varieties of spirits which people the world of Shakespeare's imagination? From all quarters they seem drawn.

The existence of fairies has been an article of belief from the earliest times. They have ever been esteemed the friends of man. In the legend lore of Germany, elves and fairies were always in the habit of gathering together to haunt weddings, and for this reason, in conjunction too with the Grecian conception of Hymen and his rites, Shakespeare has called, in a new world of fair and dainty creations, to do honour to Theseus' nuptials. The denizens of his spirit-world seem to belong to these two great types, the subjects of Oberon, and the subjects of Titania. The former,

namely Oberon, one that is merely the Anglicised form of Alberon or Alberich of German folklore,[1] is the king of the brownies or elves, those tricksy, vivacious spirits, full of fun and frolic, whereof Puck,[2] or Robin Goodfellow, is the recognised type. He is the embodiment of tricksiness without malice. Titania, on the other hand, sometimes styled "Queen Mab," was the Queen of the Fairies proper, those beautiful, airy, gossamer-robed beings whose native element was the silver moonbeams, and who spent their lives in play and innocent pleasure. Such were the two powers that ruled over the Elfland race. The name Titania is taken from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (III. 173), being employed as an alternative name for Diana. The quarrel of the "King and Queen of faery" had thrown the mystic realm into disorder, and Oberon felt it could not be allowed to continue. He therefore resolved to give his Queen her lesson by causing her to fall in love with an ass—otherwise with "sweet Bully Bottom," on whose head for the nonce has been fixed by Puck "an ass's nole." To her eyes is applied the juice of "love-in-idleness," the effect of which is to make her madly dote on the next live thing she sees after the juice has been applied. And dote she does on Bottom in his ass's nole, with a whole-hearted devotion that would be ludicrous were it not so pathetic, until Oberon having obtained his heart's desire—the Indian boy—from her, releases her from her spell by squeezing "Dian's bud" on Cupid's flower, when she straightway loathes what erstwhile she loved. The whole passage has been regarded as allegorical (II. i. 148-185)—

—"I saw . . .
Flying between the cold moon and the earth,
Cupid all arm'd; a certain aim he took
At a fair vestal throned by the west,
And loos'd his love-shaft smartly from his bow,

[1] See the Oboram of Greene's *James IV. of Scotland.*
[2] The Puki of Scandinavian legend.

As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts:
But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft
Quench'd in the chaste beams of the watery moon,
And the imperial votaress passed on,
In maiden meditation, fancy-free.
Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell:
It fell upon a little western flower,—
Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound,—
And maidens call it, love-in-idleness.
Fetch me that flower. . ."

" The vestal thronèd by the west," on whom Cupid's shaft had no power, was Queen Elizabeth, and the whole passage was a delicate piece of flattery upon the Virgin-Queen. " Cupid all armed " is esteemed to mean the Earl of Leicester's wooing of Elizabeth, with an allusion to the great preparations he made at Kenilworth in 1575.[1] The arrow intended for Elizabeth rebounded and struck " a little western flower," which is understood to mean Lettice, Countess of Essex, with whom Leicester carried on a secret correspondence and intercourse while her husband was absent in Ireland. He learning of the matter returned in 1576, and was poisoned on the journey. The flower was, of old, milk-white, viz., innocent, but had become purple with love's wound, denoting thereby her fall. The details of the case were known to Shakespeare, because his maternal relative, Edward Arden, was closely connected with the family: and because a son of that Lettice, the famous Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, the favourite of Elizabeth, and subsequently the victim of her displeasure, was his early patron and protector.

The play was adapted again and yet again after the Restoration and the reopening of the theatres, yet it fell upon evil days, Pepys remarking in his *Diary*, 1662, " This is the silliest stuff that e'er I heard." Only after the Romantic Revolt and Triumph did " the *Dream* " come into its heritage of popularity.

[1] *Cf.* Laneham's *Letter* (1575), and Gascoigne's *Princely Pleasures* (1576).

SECTION 4.—THE MERCHANT OF VENICE. 1595

We come next to *The Merchant of Venice*, the third play of Shakespeare's Second Period. As a drama of revenge and of retribution, it also lays down implicitly, if not explicitly, the cardinal rule as applicable to Jew and Gentile alike, that if to revenge our injuries be human, to forego such and to forgive is divine. To toleration it pays a noble tribute, while against fanaticism and the religion that lives by reviling others, it hurls the heaviest of indictments.

As regards the date of composition we have very little to guide us. Entered by James Roberts on the Stationers' Register in 1598 as "A Booke of the Merchaunt of Venyse, otherwise called the Jewe of Venise," it was not actually printed until 1600. Meres, in his *Palladis Tamia*, issued late in the autumn of the same year, mentions *The Merchant of Venice* as the last of the Comedies.

In Henslowe's *Diary* and *Account-Book*, wherein the sums received and paid out for the various plays are entered, there is an item, under date 25th August 1594, which runs as follows: "The Venesyon Comodey" (The Venetian Comedy). This implies that on the date in question a new drama of that name was placed on the boards. Malone and many other historians of the drama consider that this entry referred to the first rough draft of *The Merchant of Venice*. There appears no valid objection to that supposition.

At that time there was a violent popular agitation raised against the Jews generally, but directed specifically against Dr. Roderigo Lopez, the Jewish physician of the Queen. Accused of being paid to poison her Majesty by the King of Spain, he was convicted on very slender evidence and executed 7th June 1594. In all probability there had been some older play in existence on a kindred theme, which Shakespeare, with his

great facility of work and fecundity of ideas, was not long in preparing for the stage. Produced in 1594 to satisfy the public desire for some drama treating of the subject, it was subjected in 1595, and again in 1596, to very careful revision and reconstruction, being again produced in its altered state early in 1596. Than this supposed date no more exact approximation to the year of production is possible.

The play, as I have said, was issued to the public in 1600, two Quarto editions being published in the year named, with the following title: *The Excellent History of the Merchant of Venice. With the extreme cruelty of Shylocke the Jew, towards the said Merchant, in cutting a just pound of his flesh. And the obtaining of Portia by the choyse of three Caskets. Written by W. Shakespeare. Printed by J. Roberts* 1600.

The above Quarto (Q1) was registered on 22nd July 1598, with the following condition attached, "that it be not printed by the said James Robertes or anye other whatsoever, without lycence first had, from the Right Hon. the Lord Chamberlen."

The other Quarto (Q2) had certain alterations in the title. For example it ran: *The Most Excellent Historie of the Merchant of Venice: with the extreame crueltie of Shylocke the Jewe, towards the sayd Merchant, in cutting a just pound of his flesh: and the obtayning of Portia by the choyse of three chests. As it hath been divers times acted by the Lord Chamberlaine his servants. Written by William Shakespeare, At London: Printed by I. R. for Thomes Heyes, and are to be sold in Paules Churchyard, at the sign of the Green Dragon*—1600.

This, the Second Quarto (Q2), was entered on the Stationers' Register on the 28th October of that same year, "under the handes of the Wardens and by consent of Master Robertes."

The "I. R." was in all likelihood Roberts himself, who had issued the Second Quarto for Heyes. It was, however, the edition of Heyes that was used for

the Folio of 1623. The Second Quarto was reprinted in 1637 as (Q3), with a list of the actors' names, and again in 1652 (Q4). Though the play was exceedingly popular, we rarely hear of it during the seventeenth century. We learn, however, from Burbage's *Elegy* that it was one of the great tragedian's most impressive rôles—

—"the red-haired Jew,
That sought the bankrupt merchant's pound of flesh."[1]

From England the play passed to Germany, and as early as 1608, John Green's company presented there what was undoubtedly a rude version of it. Professor Herford cites the following fact, that in 1599, when Shakespeare's play had been on the stage for some three years, a Latin drama, entitled *Moschus*, by Jacob Rosefeldt, and treating of the "Bond Story," was produced at Jena in celebration of a professional wedding. The *Moschus*, however, cannot be regarded as an adaptation of the "Bond Story," but merely as a parallel. To Silvayn's *Orator*, published in the year 1596, Shakespeare probably owed some of the materials for the trial scene.

That the play was written about 1595 or 1596 in the Second Period of Shakespeare's art is evident from the following considerations, drawn from the metrical tests: (1) Less than one-tenth of the lines are rhymed, either in couplets or quatrains, the approximate number being nearly one line in thirty, out of a total of 2705. Prose is only present in the drama to the extent of 673 lines. Out of the twenty scenes in the play, thirteen have tag-rhymes, while the total number of tag-rhymes in the drama is only nineteen. (2) In consequence of the above, rhymed doggerel verse, in its two varieties of very short lines and very long lines, shows a decreasing tendency. (3) The end-stopped line is becoming less frequent, and in the play before us, particularly in the great

[1] Cf. *Elegy on Richard Burbage*, March 1618.

trial scene, the thought runs over into three, four, or even five lines. The total percentage of run-on lines is 21.5. (4) The feminine or double endings show a percentage of 17.6, with six light endings and one weak ending, while the speech-ending test reveals a large increase, viz., 22.2 per cent. (5) Classical allusions, puns, and far-fetched conceits, as well as feeble witticisms, are now disappearing, slowly but steadily, from the Shakespearian dramas, the writer no longer having need of such doubtful helps to popularity.

For these reasons, therefore, I consider *The Merchant of Venice* to have been written at a time when the dramatist's genius was approaching the middle of his Second or "Maturing" Period.[1]

The sources whence the materials were drawn that have been woven into this wonderful drama were manifold. There are three distinct threads of plot, each of them based on some well-recognised authority. The first of these threads is the "Bond Story," otherwise that of the "Pound of Flesh;" the second, that of the "Caskets," used in winning the hand of a fair lady; while the third is the elopement of the usurer's daughter with his jewels and his ducats.

With regard to the "Bond Story," there are one or two sources that at once suggest themselves. The first of these is the ballad of "Gernutus the Jew," published in Percy's *Reliques*, and stated to be ancient, but whether anterior or not to the play is a matter of opinion. Personally, I think the "Song of Gernutus the Jew" *is* older than the play. The first two stanzas run as follows—

> "In Venice town not long agoe
> A cruel Jew did dwell,
> Which livèd all on usurie
> As Italian writers tell.

[1] *Cf.* the discussions on the metrical and other tests in *Transactions of the New Shakespeare Society;* also Fleay's *Shakespeare Manual*, Abbot's *Shakespearian Grammar*, and Konig's *Der Vers in Shakspere's Dramen.*

Gernutus callèd was the Jew
Which never thought to die,
Nor never yet did any good
To them in streets that lie."[1]

The "Bond Story" or "Pound of Flesh Story" exists in many forms. Mention is made of it by Stephen Gosson in *The School of Abuse*, in connection with a lost play called *The Jew*. He says: "the two prose books played at the *Belsavage*, where you shall never find a word without wit, never a line without pith, never a letter placed in vain, *The Jew* and *The Ptolome*, shown at the *Bull*, the one representing the greediness of worldly chusers and the bloody minds of usurers; the other very lively describing how seditious estates, with their own devises, false friends, with their own swords and rebellious commons, are overthrown, neither with amorous gesture, wounding the eye, nor with slovenly talk hurting the ears of the chast hearers."[2]

Moreover, certain other forms of the "Bond Story" had reached our literature a century at least prior to Shakespeare's time, in the English *Gesta Romanorum* of Richard Robinson. In the familiar Italian story, *Il Pecorone*, it had been related by the novelist Ser Giovanni Fiorentino (1378). Like many Italian novels it is divided into *giornatas* or days, the story in question being the first of the *giornata quarta*. This novel Shakespeare in all likelihood had read, perhaps in the original Italian edition of 1565, or in an English translation in MS., whereof there were at least two, one of these being issued with changes and emendations in 1755. The "Bond" or "Pound of Flesh" story likewise exists in the Persian, the legend evidently being of widespread popularity. It is also found in the old play, *The Three Ladies of London* (1584), in the *Cursor*

[1] "Ballad or Song of Gernutus the Jew"—see Percy's *Reliques*. Sometimes written "Gerontus."

[2] Arber's edition of Gosson's *School of Abuse*.

Mundi (1320?), in the old *Meistergesang* of *Kaiser Karls Recht*, printed at Bamberg about the year 1493; in the ancient Hindu poem the *Mahabharata*, and finally in *The Orator*, written in French by Alexander Silvayn, translated into English by L. P. (the pseudo-initials of Anthony Munday), and printed by Adam Islip in 1596. The 95th Declamation by Silvayn concerns "a Jew, who would for his debt have a pound of the flesh of a Christian."[1]

Concerning the story of the "Three Caskets," which was the second thread in the composite plot, it also is recorded in Richard Robinson's English version of the *Gesta Romanorum*, being the "Thirty-Second History" there related. It is told, moreover, in the mediæval romance, *Barlaam and Josaphat*, and in John Gower's *Confessio Amantis*,[2] the form being substantially the same as that given by Shakespeare.

The flight of Jessica with her father's jewels and ducats, and her marriage with Lorenzo, which constitute the third thread in the plot, have been traced to the "Fourteenth Tale" of Massuccio di Salerno, to whom Shakespeare was indebted for previous obligations of a like nature.

In the lost play of *The Jew*, to which Gosson referred, the "Bond Story" and the "Caskets Story" had already been combined, so that the flight of Jessica was the sole portion of the play that may be called "Shakespeare's addition" to the grand total.

There can be no question, also, that he was influenced by Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*. Of comparison between the two as works of art there can be none. Shakespeare's drama is incontestably the finer play. An inferior drama, however, may often stimulate a greater writer to a nobler effort of genius, and this is what has happened in the case before us. Barabas, the Jew of

[1] *Cf.* Miss Toulmin Smith's paper before New Shakespeare Society, April 1875.

[2] *Cf.* Morley's Carisbrooke Library.

Malta, has none of Shylock's subtle complexity of nature. He is simply a monster of cruelty and blood-thirstiness. Yet he suggested Shylock, and that is glory enough.[1]

The scene of the drama lies throughout in Venice, and at Belmont, the mansion of Portia, on the mainland opposite the city. As to the duration of the action, though only eight days are represented on the stage, with intervals, three months are altogether supposed to elapse. The following is the time-analysis proposed by Mr. P. A. Daniel—

Day	I. embracing Act I.; Interval, say of a week.
,,	II. embracing Act II. Sc. i.-vii., Interval of one day.
,,	III. embracing Act II. Sc. viii.-ix; Interval bringing the time to within a fortnight of the maturity of the bond.
,,	IV. embracing Act III. Sc. i.; Interval, rather more than a fortnight.
,,	V. embracing Act III. Sc. ii.-iv.
,,	VI. ,, ,, III. ,, v.; IV.
,,	VII., VIII. ,, ,, V.

But the three months is not sufficient for all that transpires between the signing of the bond and the trial. I agree with Professor Herford that instead of trying to show, with Mr. Daniel, that Bassanio really spends three months there (in spite of III. ii. 1 ff.), it is better to say that the three brilliant and engrossing scenes in the Casket Chamber at Belmont produce an illusion of a much longer interval than that at which they have been reckoned out. No audience, however, dreams that anything is wrong.[2]

The plot has been so thoroughly analysed in its separate threads that we only need to recall the following cardinal facts in our survey of the play: (1) The signing of the bond by Antonio for Bassanio so that the latter might obtain three thousand ducats wherewith to woo befittingly the beautiful heiress of Bel-

[1] Kreyssig, *Vorlesungen über Shakespeare*, vol. iii. pp. 350-380.
[2] *Transactions of New Shakespeare Society*, 1877-9, p. 40.

mont. (2) Shylock's departure to sup with Bassanio, and Jessica's flight with Lorenzo. (3) Bassanio's choice of the leaden casket, and his winning of Portia. (4) The miscarriage of Antonio's ships and the forfeiture of his bond to Shylock. (5) The great trial scene, in which Portia delivers Antonio from the malice of the Jew.

There the play proper ends. What follows is but graceful banter which Shakespeare, with supreme art, introduces to let the tension of interest gradually subside.

Of the characters in this great play there are but seven that take rank as of prime importance. Antonio, Bassanio, Shylock, Lorenzo, Launcelot Gobbo, Portia, and Jessica are full-length portraits, differentiated and analysed with the utmost care. The other *dramatis personæ* are only outlines. For example, Salanio, Salarino, Salerio, the fair-weather friends of Antonio and Bassanio, are simply lay figures, so great is their type-resemblance. Gratiano, however, the fourth of the number, and the most virile and voluble of the company, has irony and individuality enough to turn the tables on the Jew by satirically echoing his praises of the young judge. The Duke of Venice, like all Shakespeare's rulers, is a stickler for use and wont. The Prince of Morocco and the Prince of Arragon are merely subordinate personages, designed, by their failure to choose aright in the "Caskets Scene," to work up the interest for the triumphant success of Bassanio.

Antonio, the Merchant of Venice, and his friend Bassanio, are companions of the Damon and Pythias, or David and Jonathan type. To have died for Bassanio would not have troubled Antonio; what did trouble him was that he had failed him in his hour of need. Antonio is a splendid example of the true-hearted friend whose love is closer than a brother's. His name is the synonym for all that is straightforward

and honourable on the Rialto, one in whom, as Bassanio says of him—

> "The ancient Roman honour more appears
> Than any that draws breath in Italy."

And yet this man, so gentle and loving to his Christian friends, is the bitterest of anti-Semitic persecutors. No indignity which he cast on Shylock was too foul or disgusting to be refrained from on that account. To him Shylock was the lineal descendant of the actual murderers of Christ, and was therefore to be hounded out of society, or if much provocation were given, out of life itself. Of Antonio, Karl Elze says: "From the beginning Antonio has abused and ill-treated the Jew, but this is the only stain on his character. Otherwise he is distinguished by gentleness, benevolence, and kind-heartedness, and it cannot be conceived that his hatred of the Jew would amount to such cruelty, and this at the very moment when in regard to the confiscation of the Jew's property, he gives an unmistakable proof of his generosity. His demand for Shylock's conversion arises in all probability from an entirely different motive, and we shall hardly err in seeking it in the general religious conviction of the Middle Ages, according to which none but believers in Christianity could partake of salvation and eternal blessedness. That the Jews are eternally lost is known even to Marlowe's Barabas, who says, 'I am a Jew, and therefore am I lost.'"

Bassanio occupies altogether a lower plane. Though a spendthrift, he is handsome, brilliant, the darling of his friends, one, however, who has ever lived for self, under the conveniently blind gaze of indulgent society criticism. He is, as Gervinus well puts it, "ruined in his circumstances, inconsiderate and extravagant at the expense of his friend. He seems quite to belong to the parasitical class of Antonio's friends." True, as Kreyssig hints, he has noble aims

and lofty aspirations, but has he the force of character to prosecute them in the face of all hindrances? The case would be rather more than doubtful were he in after-life compelled to stand alone. To woo Portia in a suitably splendid way, he runs his friend's head into the usurer's noose, and while every day's recurrence piles up the danger more threateningly for Antonio, my lord Bassanio goes a-wooing with a brilliant retinue new-clad at Antonio's expense, gives a magnificent banquet to which Shylock, his creditor, is invited, in order that in the meantime Bassanio's friend, Lorenzo, may steal away the usurer's daughter Jessica, with her father's ducats and jewels.[1] Though one cannot agree with Gervinus that he is only a parasite, there can be little doubt that his selfishness blinds him to the unmanly part he has been playing. Antonio, however, recognises the true ore of nobility beneath the dross. Suddenly, amidst all Bassanio's happiness, the bolt he has been dreading falls—the effect of which, however, be it noted, he had taken, before leaving, no steps to nullify, by securing other friends to guarantee the loan. Shylock has foreclosed, and Antonio is in prison. It is the disgrace of this which crushes Bassanio. One of Venice's proudest Magnificoes in prison, and for his sake! No wonder his newly affianced lady declares that there must be

> "—some shrewd contents in yon same paper,
> That steal the colour from Bassanio's cheek;
> Some dear friend dead; else nothing in the world
> Could turn so much the constitution
> Of any constant man."

From that hour Bassanio is an altered man. His heedless selfishness is sloughed, and he becomes a self-sacrificing, considerate, true-hearted fellow, whose sole desire is to prove worthy of the noble wife and the as noble friend wherewith he stands possessed. He seems to realise the hollowness and the purposeless-

[1] Heine, *Sammtliche Werke*, vol. v. p. 324.

ness of his past existence. The cleansing fires of affliction have consumed the dross out of his nature and left behind only the pure ore. Sorrow's crown of sorrow has been agony unspeakable in the wearing, but the mere fact of enduring it has ennobled a nature which though good in grain, was content to live in selfish ease on the lower plane of expediency and time-serving. Naught now satisfies it save devotion to lofty ends, and consecration to the most self-sacrificing ideals. The mere fact that he was willing to forego his newly acquired conjugal bliss that his friend might live, revealed to the keen-witted Portia how rare was the treasure she had won.

Launcelot Gobbo is one of Shakespeare's delightful clowns. With all his self-conceit he is kindly dispositioned, and the trait has not escaped the eyes of the suspicious Shylock. "The patch is kind enough," the latter interjects as a sort of *obiter dictum* amid the injunctions he is laying upon Jessica. Launcelot, in an evil hour, had been called "master" and "young gentleman" by his own father, who was sand-blind, and from that time his desires increased. He had been content to serve Shylock, but when the latter wishes to have some spy in the house of the man whom he contemplates ruining with his friend Antonio, and proposes the change to Launcelot, the boy leaps at it, ascribing it not to its true cause but to his own unparalleled merit. His colossal vanity has in it a dash of wit, which, like a golden thread, runs through it and relieves its objectionableness. A more egregious coxcomb Nature never formed; he is at once a fop and a fool, yet his very folly is laughable, because it is so unconscious. He has the good sense, however, to love his mistress Jessica, and to assist her in her elopement with Lorenzo; while, to him, Bassanio is an abridgment of all that is noble and worthy of imitation in man.

Jessica and Lorenzo are the contrasted types to

Nerissa and Gratiano. Jessica is bright, vivacious, somewhat shallow, but never dull; hypocrisy comes natural to her, having had to play the hypocrite so long in her father's household, but for all that she is capable of warm and constant affection. We must put ourselves in her place, and strive to realise what it meant living for years in daily contact with a man of Shylock's temperament. Only when we do so shall we be able tounderstand the overshadowing of spirits which went on, day in and day out, in Shylock's house, when a brilliant child of the sunshine and of song had her nature cribb'd, cabined, and confined by association with her gloomy and suspicious father.[1] No wonder Lorenzo appealed so strongly to her. He was such a contrast to all she had been accustomed to, that he stole her heart before she was aware of the theft. Jessica's innocent happiness with Lorenzo in the garden of Belmont amid the flowers and the moonlight, is so delightful in view of all she has undergone in her gloomy home at Venice, that we pardon her the means whereby she attained her bliss, in contemplation of the ecstasy of her enjoyment.

Nerissa, as Mrs. Jameson well says, is simply a favourable specimen of the confidential woman in waiting or familiar companion. Of her mistress's elegance and poetic romance, long association has enabled her to assimilate at least a trace. Affectionate and faithful, with plenty of mother wit and a ready tongue, she is nevertheless undeniably superficial. The kindly Gratiano and she are therefore well assorted. Of the latter Cowden Clarke aptly says that "he is one of those useful men in society who will keep up the ball of mirth and good humour simply by his own mercurial temperament and rattle, for he is like a babbling woodside brook, seen through at once and presenting every ripple of its surface to the sunbeams of good-fellowship."

[1] Giles, *Human Life in Shakespeare*, pp. 124-130.

We now reach the two principal characters, Shylock and Portia. The former ranks as one of the most impressive of all Shakespeare's characterisations. Though not so complex in nature as Lear, or Othello, or Hamlet, or Brutus, he is even more intense and more terribly in earnest than they by reason of the narrower range of his sympathies. Dominated as he is by one idea, to which all other emotions and passions in his nature are subordinated, viz., detestation of Christians, his soul seems to have room for no other sentiment. Of him Hazlitt writes: "He seems the depository of the vengeance of his race: and though the long habit of brooding over daily insults and injuries has crusted over his temper with inveterate misanthropy and hardened him against the contempt of mankind, this adds but little to the triumphant pretensions of his enemies. There is a strong, quick and deep sense of justice mixed up with the gall and bitterness of his resentment. The desire of revenge is almost inseparable from the sense of wrong.[1] His adversaries are so far from allowing any measure of equal dealing, of common justice and humanity between themselves and the Jew, that even when they come to ask a favour of him and Shylock reminds them of their treatment of him, Antonio, his old enemy, instead of any acknowledgment of the shrewdness and justice of the remonstrance, which would have been preposterous in a respectable Catholic merchant in these times, threatens him with a repetition of the same treatment. After this the appeal to the Jew's mercy, as if there were any common principle of right and wrong between them, is the rankest hypocrisy or the blindest prejudice."

Such hatred is grand in its sheer malign intensity! Generated as it has been by long centuries of Christian persecution, when the Jew was the object of universal

[1] "Elizabethan England and the Jews," by S. Lee, in *Transactions of New Shakespeare Society.*

detestation and contempt, can we wonder if pity be utterly foreign to such a nature? He opposed a fanatical Christianity by the fanaticism of Judaism. Was it not the case that every year in Rome, Venice, and other places the Jews were compelled by law to listen to a sermon on their innate depravity and the necessity for their conversion?[1] Such treatment could only produce one result. Into the warp and woof, therefore, of Shylock's nature was interwoven a deathless hatred of all that savoured of Christianity, because for him Christianity implied everything that was intolerant and fanatical. As Ulrici says: "Shylock holds fast to the law; forbearance, gentleness, kindliness, and all the lovely names that greet the happy on the threshold of life he has never known . . .; injustice, harshness, and contempt stood round his cradle."[2] Therefore every insult that had been hurled at him was treasured up in remembrance, and all went to fortify that unbending determination to exact to the last the terms of the bond on the luckless Antonio. No remonstrances, no threats, no fears or execrations had the slightest effect in moving him from his purpose. "Shylock here (as Stopford Brooke well remarks) is not only Shylock; he is the personification in Shakespeare's intention of the evil side of the Jewish nation. And in Shakespeare's mind the evil side was rooted in love of money."[3] Yet even his love of money pales now before his longing for revenge. The bond, principal and interest thrice told, he contemptuously refuses. The moment had arrived when the racial insults and the tribal injuries of centuries were to be avenged on a Christian persecutor. Despite the fact that he might be torn to pieces by an indignant populace five minutes later, he was going to exact his revenge—the fulfilment of the bond to the

[1] *Cf.* Browning, *Holycross Day.*
[2] Ulrici, *Shakespeare's Dramatic Art.*
[3] Stopford Brooke, *Ten Plays of Shakespeare.*

letter. And so Shylock stands whetting his knife impatiently, while the court debates the *pros* and *cons* of the case. He is a grim and a terrible figure, but he is simply and solely what Christian tyranny and injustice have made him.

Then what about his rival and vanquisher, Portia? She, the beautiful daughter of the lord of Belmont, had been left heiress of his vast possessions on condition that she married the husband who chose the correct casket in which her picture was placed. Many had tried, but hitherto all had failed, including the Princes of Morocco and Arragon. Of old Portia had seen Bassanio. When, therefore, she heard that he was among the suitors, her heart beat high that he might be destined to become her lord. She is a noble woman nobly planned. Of her Mrs. Jameson says: "All the finest parts of Portia's character are brought to bear in the trial scene. There she shines forth all her divine self. Her intellectual powers, her elevated sense of religion, her high honourable principles, her best feelings as a woman, are all displayed. She maintains at first a calm self-command, as one sure of carrying her point in the end: yet the painful, heart-thrilling uncertainty in which she keeps the whole court, until suspense verges upon agony, is not contrived for effect merely; it is necessary and inevitable. She has two objects in view, to deliver her husband's friend, and to maintain her husband's honour by the discharge of his just debt, though paid out of her own wealth ten times over. It is evident that she would owe the safety of Antonio to anything rather than to the legal quibble with which her cousin Bellario has armed her, and which she reserves as a last resource. Thus all the speeches addressed to Shylock in the first instance are either direct or indirect experiments on his temper and feelings. . . . She must be understood from the beginning to the end . . . as watching with intense anxiety for that relent-

ing spirit which she hopes to awaken either by reason or persuasion." It is a singular circumstance that Hazlitt, after praising the trial scene, "both before and after the entrance of Portia," as "a masterpiece of dramatic skill," and remarking on the legal acuteness, passionate declamations, sound maxims of jurisprudence manifested in the scene, dismisses Portia herself with the words, "Portia is not a very great favourite with us," while Coleridge in his Shakespearian notes never mentions her. But perhaps the finest analysis among English or Continental critics is that by Mr. Stopford Brooke in his recent work, *Ten Plays of Shakespeare:* "She would not be true Italian, not a woman of her time, nor the complete woman she is, had she not felt through all her nature the lifting wave of passion. Her confession of love to Bassanio before he chooses from the caskets, might seem too frank were it not that they had often met before, as Shakespeare is at pains to tell us, and interchanged 'speechless glances.' . . . She says enough to let Bassanio know she loves him, but she keeps back much, for, if he were to choose wrongly, she must say farewell to him for ever. . . . Afterwards, when her lover has chosen and he is hers, the humility of love enters into her soul and makes it the home of grace, dignity, and happiness. She lays herself, her heart, her spirit, her home, at his command."

Ulrici in *Shakespeare's Dramatic Art*[1] gives us the following excellent contrast of the two great characters: "Portia forms the sharpest contrast to her opponent Shylock. In her we have the glory of birth and of inherited possessions, in him the darkness of a low, despised descent and masses of gold accumulated with difficulty; in her the wit of poetry and the intelligence of a free, highly-cultivated mind, in him the wit of malevolence and the acuteness of practical shrewdness, tutored by oppression and persecution; in her

[1] Ulrici, vol. ii. p. 118.

faith and hope, in him distrust and fear; in her love and devotion, gentleness and a spirit of forgiveness, in him hate, harshness, unmercifulness, and a thirst of revenge. It is round these two poles that the dramatic action turns, and round them too the other figures of the piece are grouped."

Lady Martin (Helen Faucit) says:[1] "In all probability Portia's eye was the first to detect the verbal flaw in the bond. Her judgment is confirmed by that of her learned cousin, Dr. Bellario. When he, through sickness, is unable to take the case, Portia in default of all other help is compelled to step into the breach herself. Then comes the great duel between her and Shylock, in which she is victorious. Her beauty and her intellectual brilliancy are so great and so dazzling that it is only after Shylock has tottered out of the court, a beaten and a broken man, that we realise the strength of Heine's plea in favour of Shylock, 'The Jew is wronged; if his case rest on the literalism of the old Hebrew law, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, life for life, then he has been defeated only by the equal literalism of old Roman jurisprudence.'"[2]

It is the beautiful Portia, the representative of that after-bloom of Greek art, which, in the sixteenth century, from Italy outward, impregnated the world with its delightful fragrance, that defeats Shylock with his incisive but repulsive Old Testament similitudes. Is the case for ever closed and appeal is there none? As the trial of Jesus of Nazareth before Pilate has been re-tried and the verdict reversed in the tribunal of the world, so the verdict in favour of anti-Semitism in *The Merchant of Venice* has been reversed before the tribunal of man, when all the separate issues of the sentence are taken into account, until "This man has been wronged" stands now the verdict on appeal, and Shakespeare has vicariously suffered

[1] Lady Martin, *Shakespeare's Female Characters*, p. 30 ff.
[2] Heine, *Sammtliche Werke*, vol. v. pp. 324-332.

the Nemesis which in the long run overtakes the artist who, despite his convictions, ministers to the rabid prejudices of his age.[1]

But Shakespeare, at that time, could do nothing else than decide in the way he did, in consequence of the circumstances attending that miscarriage of justice entitled "the Lopez-Perez case." In the play, however, Shakespeare introduced a magnificent appeal for toleration to the Jew (III. i. 52 ff.). More he could not do. He was ahead of his time, and the blame for not doing more to right the false verdict in the Antonio-Shylock case was not his, but that of his anti-Semitical age.

SECTION 5.—ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL. 1596-1601

The fourth play in the Second Period of Shakespeare's dramatic development is *All's Well that Ends Well*. Though scarcely a comedy in the proper sense of the term, it ranks as such, simply because there is no other class to which it can be referred. Rather should it be called a biting social satire exposing the hollowness of distinctions which rest on mere earthly rank.

To guide to a decision as to date of composition there is little reliable information. No early performance of the play is recorded, nor has any early mention of it in any connection been discovered, its first appearance in print being in the Folio of 1623. The text of the First Folio is exceedingly corrupt. Of the first draft of the play the date of composition may, in all probability, be fixed at 1595-6, or thereabouts. I am strongly of opinion, however, that Shakespeare revised the play about 1601-2, for only by some such arrangement are we able to explain the occurrence of qualities of style which

[1] Boas, *Shakespeare and his Predecessors*, p. 233.

belong to his Second Period, side by side with others that are clearly contemporaneous with his Third Period.

After a careful weighing of the evidence on both sides, I feel shut up to the conclusion that in the original draft of *All's Well that Ends Well* we have the *Love's Labour Won* referred to by Meres in *Palladis Tamia* (1598). The name whereby the play was known was originally, as I believe, *Love's Labour Won*, but when revised in 1601-2, it was renamed *All's Well that Ends Well*.[1]

The metrical tests and qualities in the play all likewise favour both an early and a late date. There is a considerable number of rhyming lines in it, both couplets and alternate rhymes or quatrains; also one or two stanzaic rhymes. The pentametric rhymes Dr. Furnivall estimates at 280 out of 2981 representing the total length of the piece, and as against 1453 lines of prose and 1234 lines of blank verse;[2] while the presence of rhyme in all its forms is equal to a percentage of 19.4. Professor Hertzberg, however, denies there is any dual character in the verse that would create uncertainty as to date. He contends that the rhyming lines in the play exhibit a break in the sense, in the middle of the verse, in place of at the end, and that the harsh rhythms and elliptical constructions which occur so frequently, are quite distinct from the smooth couplets of the early comedies.[3] Of "end-stopped" lines there are several instances indicative of an early date; but, as against that, we have numerous passages in which "run-on" lines are present to as great an extent as 28.4 per cent. There are also many Alexandrines on the one hand and short lines on the other, both of which characteristics are

[1] Elze, *Essays on Shakespeare*, p. 127.

[2] *Transactions of New Shakespeare Society*, by J. A. Dow, pt. i. series 1. p. 227; also by F. G. Fleay, on the same play.

[3] Introduction to German Shakespeare Society's edition of Schlegel and Tieck's translation.

peculiar to Shakespeare's Third Period. Such lyrical passages as Act I. Sc. i. ll. 230-244; Act I. Sc. iii. ll. 134-142; Act II. Sc. i. ll. 132-213; Act II. Sc. iii. ll. 78-111; same Act and Scene, ll. 131-151; Act III. Sc. iv. Helena's letter in the form of a sonnet; Act IV. Sc. iii. ll. 252-260, Parolles' rhyming letter; Act V. Sc. iii. ll. 60-72, are what Mr. Fleay calls the *débris* of the original play, and put the probability of a revision having been made on a very strong basis. The feminine endings of the drama give us a percentage of 29.4, a considerable increase on those present in *The Merchant of Venice;* while as regards light and weak endings, we have eleven of the former and two of the latter, indicative also of later revisions that were made on the play. Speech endings likewise manifest a marked increase of nearly 50 per cent., the actual figures being 74 per cent. as against 14.9. Doggerel verse, far-fetched classical allusions, weak puns and conceits, as well as wit and fooling dragged out to the very last degree of wire-drawn tenuity, have largely, though by no means wholly disappeared. The results of the metrical tests, therefore, all tend to strengthen the view of an original draft of the play, prepared in 1596, being revised and amended at the beginning of the Third Period.

Again, we must note amongst the tests for deciding the date of the play, that the proportion of prose to verse is steadily increasing. Of the twenty-three scenes in the play, there are only seven in which prose does not appear. These are principally the ones already referred to as having a lyrical flavour about them and as being reminiscent of the older play. The proportion of prose to verse of this play is very large, being, as already stated, 1453 lines out of 2981.

Further, to revert for a moment to the presence of rhyme, there are fourteen scenes in which rhyme-tags appear, while further there are twenty-two of these rhyme-tags all told in the piece. This shows a slight

decrease as compared with *The Merchant of Venice*, the evidence still being in favour of a later revision.

Again, there is a decided decrease in the number of soliloquies spoken rather to the audience to explain the development of the action than to the speaker's self. As Professor Dowden says, this is a feature peculiar to the earlier plays, before the dramatist acquired that superb mastery over his materials which was to constitute him, as the late Henry Irving said, the most skilful and resourceful stage-manager which the histrionic world has as yet seen.[1]

The following authorities were in all likelihood consulted by Shakespeare while writing the play: Nash's *Unfortunate Traveller*, 1594; Mendoza's *Theorique and Practice of Warre* (IV. iii. 160-165), translated by Holy, 1597; "Tom Drum's Vants" in *Gentle Craft* (ii. 8), 1598 (Stokes).

Elze thinks that in the ring presented by the King to Helena, and given by her to Bertram (V. iii. 83-120), there may be a reference to the ring given by Queen Elizabeth to her favourite Essex, with the intimation that whatsoever he might ask with it as sponsor would be granted. The King in the play exclaims with regard to it—

> —"If her fortune ever stood
> Necessitated to help, that by this token
> I would relieve her."

When Essex came to prove the potency of his gage, the Countess of Nottingham (not "the Duchess," as Elze says) proved false to her trust, a sin which Elizabeth never forgave.[2]

The scene of the drama is laid partly at Roussillon, partly at Paris, partly at Florence, and partly at Marseilles. As to the time over which the action of the

[1] In conversation with the writer.

[2] See Froude's *History of England;* also Elze's *Essays on Shakespeare*, p. 147.

play extends, it is eleven days, spread over three months, thus arranged by Mr. P. A. Daniel—

Day I. embracing Act I. Sc. i.; with Interval during which Bertram makes his journey to the Court.
,, II. embracing Act I. Sc. ii.-iii.; Interval, Helena's journey.
,, III. embracing Act II. Sc. i.-ii.; Interval, cure of King's malady.
,, IV. embracing Act II. Sc. iii.-v.; Interval, Helena's return to Roussillon; Bertram's journey to Florence.
,, V. embracing Act III. Sc. i.-ii.
,, VI. ,, ,, III. ,, iii.-iv.; Interval some two months.
,, VII. ,, ,, III. ,, v.
,, VIII. ,, ,, III. ,, vi.-vii.; IV. i.-iii.
,, IX. ,, ,, IV. ,, iv.; Interval, Bertram's return to Roussillon; Helena's return to Marseilles.
,, X. embracing Act IV. Sc. v.; V. i.
,, XI. ,, ,, V. ,, ii.-iii.

The plot is somewhat complex. Helena de Narbon, the daughter of the late physician in the great family of Roussillon, is the companion of the widowed Countess, whose son, Bertram, is now the head of the house, though still a ward of the French King. Helena has fallen deeply in love with Bertram, and her secret, having been divined by the Countess, is entirely approved by her. Not in the hope of ever receiving any return does the girl entertain the passion, but as though she should

> —"love a bright particular star
> And think to wed it, he is so above me."

Her only gratification was to see him—" 'Twas pretty, though a plague, to see him every hour." Helena realises that her idol has many spots and blemishes, which she fears the Court, to which he has set out, will tend to emphasise, and she longs to save him from himself. The French King is at the time suffering from a seemingly incurable malady. For this Helena discovers a specific among her father's papers, and at once the Countess agrees to her proposal to go to Court and offer to heal the monarch. She does so, is triumphantly successful, obtains the grateful King's

permission that she may be allowed to choose a husband from the young lords of Court, and selects Bertram, Count of Roussillon. He rejects her proffered love on the ground that she is only the daughter of the family physician. Indignant at the obstinacy of the youth in the presence of so much beauty and goodness, the King compels him to marry her. Though Bertram obeys in the letter, he decrees eternal separation between himself and her until certain almost impossible conditions are fulfilled. This done, he sets out from France to the wars in Italy, having with him, as his companion and friend, Parolles, a man steeped in every vice, wickedness, and evil quality, including cowardice! The Countess, Bertram's mother, is so angry with her son that she declares she will wash him out of her blood, and that she has but one child—Helena!

Helena, oppressed by the fact that it is she who has driven Bertram away, prepares to sacrifice herself for his sake. Leaving Roussillon secretly, she betakes herself to Italy on pilgrimage, and breaks her journey at Florence, where Bertram resides. Here the silly infatuation of the youth for Diana, the daughter of the widow with whom she lodges, gives Helena the opportunity of fulfilling the conditions laid down after marriage by her husband-in-name! At once she seizes with prompt decision the chance fortune throws in her way. She is able to save Bertram by deceiving him, through a scheme which

> "Is wicked meaning in a lawful deed,
> And lawful meaning in a lawful act,
> Where both not sin, and yet a sinful fact."

Bertram imagines he has seduced Diana; he has merely consummated marriage with his own wife through innocent collusion between the chaste Diana and the equally chaste Helena. The latter meantime has exchanged rings, and Bertram, though he knows

it not, is wearing the ring given to Helena by the grateful King of France.

Meantime Parolles has been unmasked as a cheat, a liar, and a coward; also news is circulated of Helena's death. Bertram, struck to the heart with remorse by the intelligence, hurries back to France. Arrested on arrival by the King's order on suspicion of having murdered Helena, he is only saved by the sudden appearance of Helena herself, and at her feet her repentant husband casts himself, conscious now of her worth and of his own unworthiness, and pledging himself to "love her ever, ever, dearly."

The characters are all limned in subdued tints. With the exception of Parolles there is none that is either abnormally good or abnormally bad. Coleridge says of Helena that "she is the loveliest of Shakespeare's heroines."[1] That, however, is excessive praise. Noble she is, worthy of high regard and respect, but she can scarcely be styled seductive or bewitching. More impressive because more in accordance with truth is Hazlitt's analysis: "The character of Helen is one of great sweetness and delicacy. She is placed in circumstances of the most critical kind, and has to court her husband both as a virgin and a wife: yet the most scrupulous nicety of female modesty is not once violated." To this Dowden adds: "Shakespeare was interested in the story, and so admirable did it seem to him that he could not choose but endeavour to make beautiful and noble the entire character and action of Helena. This one thing is the energy, the leap-up, the direct advance of the will of Helena, her prompt unerroneous tendency towards the right and efficient deed. She does not display herself through her words; her entire force of character is concentrated in what she does."

Bertram as a man is a moral weakling when such a self-evident fraud as Parolles could impose on him

[1] Coleridge, *Shakespeare Characters.*

and lead him astray. The Countess his mother had spoilt him. He had come to believe that the world existed for him and that what he did was right. He despised Helena because she was only a physician's daughter and he lord of Roussillon. His reformation only begins when he realises how infinitely the deserted wife whom he had contemned was his superior. He sees something of his own shallow nature in that of Parolles, and the revelation startles him into self-examination. His hope for the future lies in keeping close to the strong, healthy, practical, but not profound nature of Helena, who is certainly notably good if she cannot be described as nobly great. And Karl Elze adds: "There can be no doubt that Bertram's thoughts turn from the unmasked Parolles, who feigned friendship for selfish and mean purposes, to Helena, whom he believes dead, as the only one who had shown him unselfish love, and who has again proved herself sincere and true. His relation to Diana is but an intoxication of the senses, and in excuse of his after treatment of her, it may be pleaded that he is driven to the suspicion that like Parolles she intended to rob him, for did she not begin by asking for "the monumental ring of his house?"

The Countess is an exquisite portrait of *une grande dame* of the old school, who abhorred sentiment and passionate display of emotion, but whose soul was firm based on the bed-rock of true-hearted nobility and moral excellence. To her the good are alone the truly great. Her counterpart is to be found in the old lord Lafeu, whose sharp tongue only lashes the wicked, and exposes the hypocrite, coward, and false-hearted *roué* such as Parolles. Lafeu, as Hazlitt says, in his honesty and uprightness, loved virtue as he loved God. To a virtuous man and woman he was a friend indeed, be their station high or low. With a kindly eye he looks on Helena's love for Bertram, because in that love he sees the salvation of the youth.

He realises, as Dowden says, "that Bertram when delivered into the hands of Helena is safe; she will fashion him as he should be fashioned, and free him from the snares and delusions which beset his years of haughty ignorance and dulness of heart." Finally her calm, well-balanced affection is the plank that is to save Bertram amidst the welter of the world's deceit.

Section 6.—The Taming of the Shrew. 1596

Each successive play produced by Shakespeare, either working alone or in collaboration, evinces advance in mental or technical development. *The Taming of the Shrew*, although not by any means entirely his work, is no exception to this rule.

During the final decade of the reign of Elizabeth, for some reason or other now unknown, a succession of plays, all of them dealing with remedies for women and wives cursed with shrewish tempers and "shrewd tongues," were performed and many of them published. Dekker and Chettle's *Patient Grizzel*, Heywood's *Woman Killed by Kindness*, though appearing subsequent to the performance of the play before, were symptomatic of the feelings of the time. The "ducking-stool" and the "jougs," though rough and ready medicines for those females who made home hideous with their clamour and complaints, were still in vogue in rural districts, and were often effective in achieving the end desired. Shakespeare was ever on the alert to detect the mood of the moment, and was too keen a "business" man to let a chance like that escape. It happened that in the year 1594 a play had appeared with the title, *A Pleasant Conceited Historie called the Taming of a Shrew, as it was sundry times acted by the Right Honourable, the Earle of Pembroke, his Servantes. Printed at London* 1594.

This play, written probably about 1592, and based on a still older piece on the same theme, was prepared

by a dramatist who was influenced by Marlowe's style, and who had certainly read Gascoigne's *Supposes*. Possibly the success achieved by this play at Henslowe's theatre when produced by the "Lord Admiral's Men," stimulated their rivals, otherwise the "Lord Chamberlain's Servants," at "The Theatre" (whereof Shakespeare was one) to attempt something also, that the passing fancy of the hour might not go by unimproved. Shakespeare's play was probably written, therefore, early in 1596, although no very implicit reliance can be placed on the date. As his groundwork he appears to have taken the drama of 1594. Though a number of the old scenes were left untouched, he wrote in several new scenes, that he might give a more vivid colour and greater point to the play in those places where such qualities seemed lacking. The parts of the drama which to me seem beyond question to bear the mint-stamp of Shakespeare's genius are: The Induction; Act I. Sc. i. ll. 1-47; Act II. Sc. i. ll. 169-326; Act III. Sc. ii. ll. 1-125, 151-241; Act IV. Sc. i. iii.-iv. ll. 20-71, v.; Act V. Sc. ii. ll. 1-177.

There are also certain lines scattered here and there throughout Acts II., III., and IV. that bear resemblance to Shakespeare's style, and seem to have been touched up by him *en passant*, but the play has always been a stumbling-block to scholars. Many of them have sought to limit Shakespeare's work on it to the smallest amount, little more than revision in fact. Such objections as these have been stated to the Shakespearian authorship: (*a*) That the play does not occur in Meres' list in *Palladis Tamia*, though it must then have been produced, and as he mentions every undoubted play of him whom he regarded as the greatest dramatist of the age, even *Titus Andronicus*, it is unlikely he should have omitted this if it were believed to be Shakespeare's. (*b*) This is the only play with an "Induction," forming as it were a play within a play, in all Shakespeare's work, and the "Induction" is

most clumsily managed, there being no provision for getting Sly off the stage. Shakespeare, the superb stage-craftsman, could never have been guilty of this. (*c*) This play was specially ridiculed by Fletcher in his *Woman's Prize, or the Tamer Tamed*, a course of action the latter never could have been guilty of to the friend and master whom he loved and admired so profoundly.[1] These objections, therefore, their upholders contend, go to show that Shakespeare's work could only have been of an editorial not of an authorial character.

Now as to the further metrical tests which as far as possible decide the date when the play was written, we have an increase in rhyming couplets and quatrains, but these belong almost wholly to the non-Shakespearian portions of the drama. On the other hand, there are many passages, consisting to a marked extent of " run-on " lines, that would point to a late period of composition if the test is to be absolutely relied upon. Here is an example of the " run-on " lines in Act I. Sc. i. which, in opposition to many other editors of Shakespeare's work, I consider to be his—

> " And therefore, Tranio, for the time I study,
> Virtue, and that part of philosophy
> Will I apply, that treats of happiness
> By virtue specially to be achiev'd.
> Tell me thy mind; for I have Pisa left,
> And am to Padua come, as he that leaves
> A shallow plash, to plunge him in the deep."

Further, in the play there are examples of scenes containing rhymed doggerel verse, both long lines and short lines; then there are other scenes where nothing of the kind occurs. We have, moreover, passages where the " end-stopped " line largely predominates, indicative of an early date, but it happens not unfrequently that the very next scene contains a proportion of " run-on " lines, giving as unmistakable a voice for

[1] See *Transactions 'New Shakespeare Society*, vol. i. 1874, Rev. F. G. Fleay, p. 285.

a date that is late. These facts are mentioned to show the contradictory character of the evidence. But to come to details. The total length of the play is 2671 lines, whereof there are 516 lines in prose and 1971 lines in blank verse, some of it Shakespearian, while other parts are by the alien hand. Of pentameter or five-measure lines there are 169, while other rhyming measures constitute a percentage of 4.4. Of "feminine endings" there is a percentage of 17.7, with one light ending and one weak ending. Enjambed lines show a decrease, "end-stopped" lines being in the majority, while in "speech-endings" the test reveals only a percentage of 3.6. Numerous classical allusions, puns, conceits, and wire-drawn witticisms; but what we chiefly desire the reader to note is the exceedingly varying manner in which the results from the tests appear, showing without doubt that two hands were at work on the piece. Putting the evidence derived from the tests into force, we reach an unquestionable verification of those portions of the play which we esteemed to be Shakespearian. (*See* p. 218.)

The play therefore is a play of contradictions, there being no unanimity among the conclusions from metrical tests. If Shakespeare wrote the whole work, and there was no second or "alien" hand employed, then it must have been accomplished at two distinct periods of his life, when the later sections would stand in relation to the former as a revision. The most probable theory, however, is that of "a second writer" being engaged on the work who took independent views and pursued independent methods. On this hypothesis difficulties can be more satisfactorily explained than on any other.

The scenes where the incidents of the play are laid are at Padua and at Petruchio's country house, wherever that might be!

As regards the duration of the action in the drama, Mr. Daniel says that time in this play is a very uncertain

element, difficult to arrange in any consistent scheme. He suggests the following time-analysis [1]—

Day I. embracing Act I.
„ II. „ „ II.; Interval of a day or two.
„ III. „ „ III. Sc. i.; Saturday, the eve of the wedding.
„ IV. embracing „ III. „ ii.; IV. i.; Sunday, the wedding day. Interval.
„ V. embracing Act IV. „ ii.
„ VI. „ „ IV. „ iii.-v.; V.; the second Sunday.

With regard to the sources from which the materials of the play are derived, many analogues to the "Taming" thread of the plot exist, but no very close parallels. There is, for example, an English metrical tale based on a purpose somewhat similar, to wit, *A Merry Jest of a Shrewd and Curst Wife, wrapped in a Morel's Skin for her Good Behaviour*, the date of which is not later than 1575.

From that source Shakespeare borrowed nothing, the expedient employed for curing the Shrew, viz., by wrapping her in the salted hide of an old horse, belonging to a school of fun "too broadly vigorous" for his taste. Less headlong horseplay characterises the Italian *Notti piacevole* of Straparola (1550), also the *Conde Lucanor* (1575) from the Spanish.

As has been said, however, the older play, *The Taming of a Shrew*, was really the groundwork of the piece as we have it to-day, though between the two there are several important variations. The "Bianca" underplot is derived from Gascoigne's *Supposes*, while the incident of the "Latin lesson" is taken from *The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London* (1590). In the earlier foundation-play there are three sisters in the family in place of two, while "Ferando" is the name of the "Tamer" in place of Petruchio. For undertaking the terrible task of "taming the Shrew," Ferando in the older play receives six thousand crowns from Aurelius and Poly-

[1] *New Shakespeare Society's Transactions*, 1877-9.

dore, the suitors of Emilia and Philena, the younger sisters, who cannot be married until Kate has been settled. The older play itself had been revised, as I have said, by some clever playwright before Shakespeare took the matter up, and the three types of work, the original warp, the woof which the practised playwright interwove therewith, and finally the splendid Shakespearian revision and embroidery, can all be traced by a careful student in the piece as it stands before us to-day. But there any likeness and comparison between the plays stop. To liken Ferando to Petruchio is to compare lead with gold!

As to the "Induction"—the deception practised upon the drunken Christopher Sly—the idea is a familiar one alike in Oriental and Western literatures. Readers of the *Arabian Nights* will recollect the delightful story of "Abou Hassan, or the Sleeper Awakened," and Heuterus states that the jest of the "Induction" was actually played by Duke Philip the Good (who lived about 1440) on a drunken man in Brussels.[1] Cicero in the *Tusculan Disputations*[2] also tells the story of Dionysius and Damocles, from which elements have been borrowed. In the no longer extant collection of tales by Richard Edwards (1570) there was a story of a drunken tinker not unlike this, which may have been used. Mr. Morton Luce thinks that the fragment known as "The Waking Man's Dream," which Norton in 1845 regarded as part of a reprint of the collection by Edwards, is probably a later and distinct version, borrowed in part from *The Taming of the Shrew*. The old play made a much better ending than the one before us. Sly is carried back in his drunken sleep to the alehouse, and, after awaking, goes home to his wife, knowing now how "to tame a shrew."

The plot is exactly what is disclosed by the title—

[1] Heuterus, *De Rebus Burgundicis* (1584).
[2] *Tusculan Disputations*, v. 21.

the taming of Kate the Shrew by Petruchio, the means he takes to do it being simply to " out-Herod Herod " in violence and rage, under pretext of concern for her welfare. He will allow her neither to sleep nor to eat, neither to rest by night nor to have peace by day, through his ill-timed concern for her comfort, until he tames her into submission, and " Kate the Curst becomes Kate the Kind."

The underplot of Bianca's love affair is quite secondary to the main issue. There are in reality only two major characters in the play, Petruchio and Kate. The other personages are so subordinate as to be mere shadows—Bianca, the younger sister, though sweet, being entirely colourless and insipid, while the suitors are automata. Kate is one of those women who declare they will never allow their husbands to govern them, yet who will never respect those husbands until they *can* govern them. Kate will do her utmost to plague and torment Petruchio until she finds that he is turning the tables on her by doing precisely the same things towards her in a more violent way, but professedly out of kindness and consideration for her. By contrast he shows her the utter folly of her conduct. She realises what a fool she has been, by seeing the designed folly whereof Petruchio is guilty. " The situation of poor Katharine (says Hazlitt), worn out by Petruchio's incessant persecutions, becomes at last almost as pitiable as it is ludicrous, and it is difficult to say which to admire most, the unaccountableness of his actions, or the unalterableness of his resolutions." Of Petruchio the same writer says: " The most striking feature in the character is the studied approximation to the intractable character of real madness, his apparent insensibility to all external considerations, and utter indifference to everything but the wild and extravagant freaks of his own self-will. There is no contending with a person on whom nothing makes any impression but for his own purposes." Katharine

after marriage betrays no traces of the Shrew in her conduct whatsoever. In comparing the two sisters, Katharine and Bianca, the Rev. H. N. Hudson, the distinguished American Shakespearian scholar, says: "The seeming contrast between the sisters is strongly marked and probably misrepresents them both to their friends. Both, it seems to me, are affected, their affectation passing for sincerity: Kate puts on the show of what she has not; Bianca puts off the show of what she has; the one purposely seems worse, the other better, than she is. Kate, too proud to be vain, will do nothing to gain friends, everything to serve them; Bianca, too vain to be proud, will do everything to gain friends, nothing to serve them."

The Taming of the Shrew is one of the most interesting of Shakespeare's plays from an autobiographic point of view. He refers therein to many places and personages associated with Stratford and his own early history. In common with the 2 *Henry IV.* and the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, it is the most illuminating of his plays as regards himself. Sly, for example, says of himself, "Am I not Christopher Sly, old Sly's son of Burton-heath?" Burton-heath is beyond question "Barton-on-the-Heath," where Shakespeare's aunt lived, the wife of Edmund Lambert. Then the designation, Sly, Slie, Slegh, Sleigh (for all forms are pronounced alike), was that of residents in the neighbourhood of Stratford, whose descendants are still living in the county. Sly, moreover, made the following addendum as a reference, "Ask Marian Hackit, the fat alewife of Wincot, if she know me not." Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps and Mr. Sidney Lee have investigated all this question, and the results of their inquiries are most interesting. Wincot is a hamlet about four miles from Stratford, near land which in Shakespeare's day was probably an open heath. The hamlet forms part of the parish of Quinton, and there a family of Hackits resided in the years of Shake-

speare's youth. "Wilmcote," the birthplace of Shakespeare's mother, was also pronounced "Wincot," but no Hackits have been known to reside there. Furthermore, the names Stephen Sly and Old John Naps of Greece (or Greet), Peter Turf and Henry Pimpernell, were all those of people associated with Warwickshire and the neighbouring counties, a family of Nabbs (pronounced Naps) being for generations settled on the borders of Shropshire, where they still are resident; while, as regards the Turfs and Pimpernells, they may yet be found in Worcestershire and Gloucestershire.

The whole scene of the "Induction" is autobiographic. The references made were to men and women whom Shakespeare had personally known and "companied with," and who had each contributed somewhat to the interweaving of the wondrous texture of his multi-threaded genius. The scenes of the "Induction" give us a vivid glimpse into the life of those early days when Shakespeare was a youth, when "Merrie England" was still a true description of the country, and when the existence of her rural population was still simple and unsophisticated.

Section 7.—Henry IV., Parts I. and II. 1596-8

We come now to examine two plays which have deservedly been ranked as among Shakespeare's masterpieces, not only in the domain of "Dramatic Histories," but in that of Comedy as well.

The dates of composition may be ascribed to some period between the upward date of 1596 and the downward one of 1598. The opening lines of Part I. seem to indicate sufficiently definitely the Spanish expedition of 1596—

> "So shaken as we are, so wan with care,
> Find we a time for frighted peace to pant,
> And breathe short-winded accents of new broils
> To be commenc'd in stronds afar remote."

Then in Act II. i. 12, the line "the poor fellow never joyed since the price of oats rose" is a clear reference to the "Proclamation for the Dearth of Corn" made that same year; while in Act V. iv. 41, the line "the spirits of valiant Shirley, Stafford, Blunt, are in my arms," may be a further guide to the settlement of the date of composition, if it be taken as a reference to the knighthood conferred on the Shirleys in 1597.

As early as 1598 the play was regarded as already popular, for in that year it was not only mentioned by Meres in *Palladis Tamia*, but both Justice Silence and Sir John Falstaff are alluded to in Jonson's closing words in *Every Man out of his Humour*, when Fastidious Brisk, pointing to Fungoso, says to Saviolina, "Lady, this is a kinsman to Justice Silence," while Macilente ends the play with the words, "A *plaudite* for God's sake; but if you, out of the bounty of your good-liking, will bestow it, why, you may in time make lean Macilente as fat as Sir John Falstaff."

These allusions, then, point to the composition of the play as having taken place late in 1596 or early in 1597, while its production on the stage may be referred to the spring of 1597.

The following entry appears that same year (1597-8) in the Stationers' Registers: "Andrew Wyse, xxv^to^ die Februarii: entered for his copy under thandes of Master Dix: and Master Warden Man, a booke intituled the History of Henry iiij. with his battaile of Shrewsburye, against Henry Hottspurre of the Northe, with the conceipted mirthe of Sir John Falstoff. vi^d.^"

This edition was followed by a Quarto volume issued in 1598, entitled *The | History of | Henrie the | Fourth: | with the battell of Shrewsburie, | between the King and Lord | Henry Percie, surnamed | Henrie Hotspur of | the North; |* With the humorous conceipts of Sir | *John Falstaffe: | At London. | Printed by P. S. for Andrew Wise*—1598.

No fewer than five other Quartos, dated respectively

1599, 1604, 1608, 1613, 1622, were issued before the Folio of 1623; wherein the play is styled, *The First Part of Henry the Fourth, with the Life and Death of Henry sirnamed Hot-spurre.*

The Second Part was issued in Quarto in 1600, but did not attain to the popularity of the First, only one edition being issued with the title, *The Second Part of Henrie | the fourth, | continuing to his death, | and Coronation of Henrie | the fift. | With the humours of Sir John Fal | staffe and swaggering | Pistol. | As it has been sundrie times publikely | acted, by the right honourable, the Lord Chamberlaine his Servants.* | Written by William Shakespeare: *London: printed by V. S. for Andrew Wise and William Aspley*—1600.

The two plays are absolutely and altogether the work of one hand, and with *Henry V.* they form a uniform and complete Lancastrian trilogy.

The Second Part, though unknown, and as Herford says, "presumably unwritten," when the First Part was entered as "The History" in February 1598, nevertheless "must have been both written and produced before the close of the year, so that Jonson in his second comedy, staged early in 1599, found it sufficiently popular to make of it a "gag," while *Henry V.* is thus fixed also as produced in 1599.

As regards the metrical tests and the light they throw on the date of composition, their evidence quite bears out the historical place assigned to the play by dramatic annals. Rhyme almost wholly disappears in the play, the percentage of it in Part I. being 2.7, and in Part II. 2.9, showing that Shakespeare had now learned to distinguish between what was suitable for lyrical and what for purely dramatic treatment. Rhymed doggerel verse also is almost entirely absent. In this play (the two parts being for the time regarded as one) Shakespeare uses prose to a much greater extent than ever before. Out of 3170 lines in Part I., 1464 are in prose, while in Part II., out of a total of

3437 lines, 1860 are in prose. He also intermingles the prose and verse with consummate art. "End-stopped" lines are decreasing, and "run-on" lines increasing, the percentage of the latter being 22.8 for Part I. and 21.4 for Part II., while feminine or double endings also grow in frequency, the percentage being 5.1 for Part I. and 16.3 for Part II., with five light endings and two weak endings in the former, and one light ending in the latter. As regards the speech-ending test, that yields a percentage of examples amounting to 14.2 for Part I. and 16.8 for Part II. Classical allusions of an inappropriate character, wire-drawn conceits, and feeble puns, disappear as the Second Period wears on. All through the play the writer reveals growing ease and freedom, as he gradually sinks the lyrical poet in the dramatic, and becomes the unsurpassed master-craftsman. The cumulative evidence, therefore, furnished by the metrical tests, simply corroborates the testimony advanced by the witness of history.

As to the sources whence the materials for the play were drawn, we note the following facts. For both Part I. and Part II. the materials are taken from Holinshed's and Hall's *Chronicles;* also, with regard to the comic substructure, from one of the oldest, rudest, and crudest of the annal-plays, *The Famous Victories of Henry V. containing the Honourable Battell of Agincourt,* written about 1587, staged in 1588, and licensed for printing in 1594.[1] Over and above the edition of that year, two others appeared, dated 1598 and 1617 respectively. These authorities were followed closely with, on the whole, few deviations, perhaps the most marked of these being the one in which Hotspur and the Prince are represented as being of the same age, that their rivalry may be all the more natural. Northumberland, Glendower, Prince John, the Archbishop, Mowbray, are but

[1] Hazlitt, *Shakespeare Library,* Pt. II. i. p. 323.

slightly changed. Some curious errors have, however, crept in, as, for example, where Mordake the Earl of Fife is styled the eldest son to the beaten Douglas (I. i. 71);[1] where Henry IV. (born in 1367) complains of his "old limbs" in 1405; where the same Hotspur who fought at Otterburne in 1388 and was styled in the ballad of the "Battle of Otterburne," at that time "a gentle knight"—

> "The Persie came befor hys hoste,
> Whych was ever a gentyll knyght,
> Upon the Douglas lowde gan he crye,
> 'I wyll holde that I have hyght.'"

Yet in the play he is represented as "young Harry Percy," while the revolt of Archbishop Scroop (1405), the rising of Northumberland (1408), and the death of Glendower (1415) are all represented as nearly contemporaneous.[2]

From the annal-play *The Famous Victories*, Shakespeare certainly drew a large amount of humorous suggestion. Prince Henry's riotous youth is vividly depicted in the early scenes. It is there that we find "Ned" and "Sir John Oldcastle," the prototype of Falstaff; there too that we discover the suggestions for the revel in the old tavern at Eastcheap, and for the robbery of carriers on Gadshill, even to "the great race of ginger" which they convey. The Prince himself in this annal-play is arrested by the Mayor and the Sheriff; there too it is that he gives the Chief Justice a box on the ear, a scene straightway travestied by the clown in a fashion which may have suggested Falstaff's personation of the King to the Prince. In this crude "foundation-play" there are suggestions perceptible of the non-humorous as well as of the humorous incidents that occur in the greater drama. Prince Henry's lofty apology to his father for his

[1] Shakespeare was probably misled by the omission of a comma in Holinshed.

[2] Courtenay, *Commentaries on Shakespeare's Historical Plays*—"Henry IV."

conduct, the episode of the removal of the crown, with the Prince's noble exoneration of the Chief Justice, and his withdrawal from his disgraceful companions, are all incidents borrowed from the earlier piece.

Henry IV. deals rather with the "pre-regal" life of him who afterwards became Henry V., than limns for us any satisfactory portrait of Henry Bolingbroke, his father. Of the latter it is no flattering picture that is drawn. All Henry's unscrupulous king-craft to render his position as monarch secure is stated against him with pitiless truth. Though the dying king confesses his "devious courses" to his son in the famous speech—

> "Come hither, Harry, sit thou by my bed;
> And hear, I think, the very latest counsel
> That ever I shall breathe. God knows, my son,
> By what by-paths and indirect crook'd ways
> I met this crown; and I myself know well,
> How troublesome it sat upon my head:
> To thee it shall descend with better quiet,
> Better opinion, better confirmation;"—

the confession is vitiated by the infamous State policy he inculcates on that son, that the friends by whose aid he had been advanced to the throne, lest they might aspire to play the rôle of "king-maker" with some one else, should be cut off: "Therefore, my Harry (he continues), be it thy course to busy giddy minds with foreign quarrels." That Henry IV. had so persistently practised the policy whose precepts he enforced upon his heir, was the reason why he descended to the grave so markedly unwept, unhonoured, and unsung. To Henry V., the legacy of his father's policy was a cruel one, and nothing reveals more the strength of the moral fibre in the young king than his determination to shape his own path. Of all the kingly figures Shakespeare drew he seems to have loved Henry V. the most profoundly, and to have lavished on him all the resources of his art. Henry represented to Shakespeare all that was safe, stable,

and heroic in English kingship, and his portrait stands as his ideal of the perfect king and the perfect Englishman. Henry as Prince was absolutely unselfish. It had been his ambition to conquer or to kill Hotspur. When he does so, he is filled with pity and admiration for the splendid qualities of the dead man, and gives expression to a noble panegyric upon the redoubtable warrior. In Prince Henry we have another of Shakespeare's own portraits, the man of thought who was also the man of action.

The era of Henry IV. from 1399 to 1413 was, from a national point of view, simply a period of marking time, that of Henry V. an epoch of brilliant achievement and of conquest; but, alas! the early death of the latter clouded the sky of the nation's hopes regarding him. With unerring insight Shakespeare seized upon this catastrophe as that which was to cast the halo of the hero's untimely departure upon the young monarch's deeds, glorifying those that were great, condoning those that were tinctured with rashness or error.

Though short and containing within its terminal dates no very outstanding historical events, the epoch from 1399 to 1413 was nevertheless the social and political seed-time wherein much that made for popular liberty within the next century took root in the soil of the people's character. Shakespeare emphasises this in his great trilogy, *Henry IV.*, Parts I. and II., and *Henry V.*, in which many of the great reforms of the future are accurately foreshadowed.

With its immediate historic though not its chronological predecessor, *Richard II.*, this play cannot escape comparison. In the former, there is a rhetorical lyricised flow in the verse, quite unlike the mode of expression personages under the *Sturm und Drang* of intense emotion and passionate feeling would employ. In fact to obtain an insight into the distinctive differences of the lyrical and the dramatic mode of treatment, no better object-lesson could be desired for

study than to draw a comparative analysis between *Richard II.* and *Henry IV.* Lyrical passages there are in the latter play, as, for instance, in the highly emotional and richly poetical speeches of Glendower who, as he said in his debate with Hotspur,

> —" was trained up in the English Court,
> Where being but young I framèd to the harp
> Many an English ditty lovely well,
> And gave the tongue a helpful ornament."

In general, however, in both parts of this great play we have, for the first time, the mature dramatic verse of Shakespeare, with its wonderful capacity of wedding itself to the character of each speaker and the matter of each speech.

The two parts do not by any means deftly dovetail into each other. The " Second " is rather a " warming up " of the matter utilised in the " First," while the spirit of youth and the light-hearted fun which were so prominent in the earlier portion of the drama, in the later largely disappear. The pall of sadness gradually descends on the piece, deepening until the end. Of course, in both parts the mighty force making for enjoyment is Falstaff. Without him the play would be an unwieldy mass of inchoate incidents. He is the *nexus* of humour and the electric thread of wit which bind them together.

The plot is difficult to analyse, consisting as it does merely of a succession of historic incidents and scenes not always, chronologically speaking, immediately sequential to each other, though made so by the magic of the genius of a great artist for the purposes of increased dramatic effect. The action of the play begins in Part I. from the Battle of Homildon or Holmedon, 14th September 1402,[1] and continues until that of Shrewsbury, 21st July 1403, thus embracing the historic events of over ten months, while the dramatic

[1] Prof. Herford prefers to date the action of this part, from the defeat of Mortimer by Glendower, 22nd June 1402, calling the reader's attention in a footnote to the fact that the Battle of Homildon or Holmedon had already occurred before the close of Act I. Sc. i.

time covers about three months (*i.e.* ten historic days with three contemporaneous "Falstaffian" days and intervals). Part II. includes the events from 21st July 1403, until Henry IV.'s death on 9th April 1413, in the historic time, while the dramatic time covers about nine historic days with three "Falstaffian" days and intervals.

The following is the time-analysis of the two parts as given by Mr. P. A. Daniel and corrected by Professor Herford.

Duration of time, Part I., ten "historic" days with three extra "Falstaffian" days and intervals—

Historic Days.		*Falstaffian Days.*	
Day	I. embracing I. i.	Day	I. embracing I. ii.
	Interval.		
„ II.	„ I. iii.	„ II.	„ II. i.-ii.
	Interval.		II. iv.
„ III.	„ II. iii.	„ III.	„ II. iv.
„ IV.	„ III. i.		III. ii.
„ V.	„ III. ii.		
„ VI.	„ III. iii.		
	Interval.		
„ VII.	„ IV. i.		
	Interval.		
„ VIII.	„ IV. ii.		
„ IX.	„ IV. iii.-iv.		
„ X.	„ V. i.-v.		

Part II., nine "historic" with three extra "Falstaffian" days and intervals—

Historic Days.		*Falstaffian Days.*	
Day	I. embracing I. i.	Day	I. embracing I. ii.
	Interval.		
„ II.	„ I. iii.		II. i.
	II. iii.	„ II.	„ II. ii.
	Interval.		II. iv.
„ III.	„ III. i.		
	Interval.		
„ IV.	„ III. ii.		
	Interval.		
„ V.	„ IV. i.-iii.		
„ VI.	„ IV. iv.-v.		
„ VII.	„ V. ii.		V. i.
	Interval.	„ III.	„
„ VIII.	„ V. iv.		V. iii.
„ IX.	„ V. iii.		

The plot in brief, therefore, deals with the events of Henry IV.'s reign, but more particularly the successive risings against his authority, instigated by men whose loyalty he did not sufficiently trust, and whom he unwisely provoked, such as Percy, Worcester, Scroop, Glendower, and the like. Another thread in the plot is that of the Prince's conduct, his insult to the Chief Justice, and so forth, while a third thread deals with Falstaff and his relations with Justice Shallow, under whose personality was intended to be satirised Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecote.

The interest of the play decidedly wanes towards the conclusion of Part II., the giant personality of Falstaff alone preventing it from evaporating altogether. The two parts considered as one reveal this fact, that Shakespeare throughout has a dual aim in view, viz., to record two distinct yet germane processes of development: (*a*) The evolution of the national growth along the best lines of expansion; (*b*) the development of the individual ideal of character. *Henry IV.*, Parts I. and II., saw the ideal of both kingly and individual dignity, as exemplified in Prince Hal, struggling against sore temptation to prove untrue to its own innate nobility, and so to set the example of national idiosyncrasy on a lower plane than the noblest. For a time the Prince was tempted in two directions: (1) To imitate his father, Bolingbroke's, crooked and time-serving policy, and (2) to swing to the other extreme and to allow the temptation of mere social popularity, as exemplified in the companionship of Falstaff and his fellows, to have some measure of influence over him. The decision of Prince Hal, however, to consecrate himself to England's glory and to England's greatness would be taken, I should think, subsequent to that momentous interview with his dying father, after he had, for a moment, placed the crown on his own head (while his father slept) and gone forth to the next apartment

wearing it. Henry IV., awaking, missed the crown, and at first imagined that his heir, like his people, was aweary of him and wished him dead, that the young Prince might then and there succeed. The latter's vindication of himself, however, is so noble, so instinct with all the greatest and grandest attributes of heart and soul, that we, like his father, conclude that God put the thought into his mind to remove the crown to afford him an opportunity to reveal his true nature to us and to him. From that moment we realise that for the Prince a mental and moral rebirth has taken place, that the past with its eager searchings here, there, and everywhere for an outlet for the super-abundant energy of his great nature was over indeed, and that henceforth his rôle in life was to be that of the hero-king and the patriot-ruler whom Shakespeare chiefest among all his master-spirits delighted to honour. Prince Hal's excesses had not proceeded from any love of evil for evil's sake, but simply that he might find some channel through which to work off that virile vitality for which Court functions provided no outlet.

All the stimuli that had come to him in days gone by, and had seemingly been allowed to pass unimproved, were now to be recalled and made to discharge their mission—the stimuli referred to in the terrible indictment laid against him by his father (III. ii. 29 ff.), when the King bitterly told him that "The hope and expectation of thy time is ruined," adding with scorching sarcasm—

> "Thou hast lost thy princely privilege
> With vile participation"—

winding up his exordium by comparing Hal and Hotspur, greatly to the disadvantage of the former. So deeply was the Prince stung by this admonition that he vows he will redeem all these evil reports on Harry Percy's head, making him his factor to engross up

glorious deeds on his behalf.[1] He acquitted himself nobly at Shrewsbury, by saving his father's life in the battle, and by fulfilling his vow in slaying Harry Percy, though he permitted Falstaff to reap the glory of the deed. Apparently he seems again to have wearied of the Court, and to have fallen once more under Falstaff's influence—ah, who could resist him? But thereafter came the final separation.

In the Prince's nature there are present the most contradictory elements. At one time he delights in the splendid pageantry of the Court; anon threatens, in order to bring into contempt knightly and chivalric customs, to joust in the lists with the favours of a notorious prostitute from the stews on his helm (*Richard II.*, V. iii. 16); now promising his father to be all that he would have him be; ere long striking the Chief Justice of England for sending Bardolph to prison, for which outrage he was imprisoned and expelled from the Privy Council. The key to his character is his love of a jest. Humour is to him the salt of life, hence the secret of his love for Falstaff; hence too the reason why he finds congenial society in the life of taverns, and in cracking jokes with drawers and with bullies and "roaring boys." He has selected this society, in which all elements meet and by contact with which a boundless material for mirth and raillery is created.

Yet this is the man whom Shakespeare has chosen as his hero; the man whose glory he is never aweary in *Henry V.* of praising and extolling; the man whose character is the reflection of his own. Even so, and the reason is that with all his mischief and waywardness, his sudden accessions of mad fun and frolic, these form but the outer crust of a great and a glorious nature—a nature capable of understanding all sorts and conditions of men, because he has mixed with them and knows them all. Harry Monmouth is an

[1] 1 *Henry IV.*, III. ii. 132 ff.

infinitely greater soul than Harry Percy, because the former was a man who could turn a question inside out and examine it from every point of view, while Percy could only see its application, like Glendower, where it affected himself. Harry Monmouth had a mind both provident and prescient, a will sternly set to do what was just when once he had seen his path ahead, and a courage of most royal calibre, which not all the forces or the powers of evil in league against him, could cause to pause or to parley.

Hazlitt dismisses Prince Hal somewhat curtly, reserving all his attention for the time when he will have become king. "The characters of Hotspur and Prince Henry are two of the most beautiful and dramatic, both in themselves and from contrast, that ever were drawn. They are the essences of chivalry. We like Hotspur the best on the whole, perhaps because he was unfortunate." Nor does Coleridge mention him. Gervinus, however, is altogether adequate in his analysis. "Urged by a smouldering fire of ambition, the Prince encounters Percy's flaming passion for glory: the modest man meets his despiser, the idler in knightly deeds meets the master of chivalry, and he overcomes him, in no wise because the arbitrary fancy of the poet so willed it, but because the good cause thus required it, and the good powerful nature of the Prince thus permitted it—a nature in which qualities were inherent which far outshone even the great gifts of Harry Percy. For now when the victory over Percy has given him a higher position, there appear qualities that make him greater than this great one. He stands over the conquered with admiration, with forgiveness, with emotion and pity. It had been his burning ambition to kill Percy: and now it is done, the flame is at once extinguished, and gives place to the beautiful human emotions of the heart." In a word, to Hotspur "honour" presented itself merely as a personal equation synonymous with

" courage " as Schlegel says, and with no ethical implication involved. To do honourably at all times when no interests of his own were at stake but when those of his neighbour were in jeopardy, never seems to have occurred to him, as when he would have poisoned Prince Hal with a pot of ale. To the latter honour meant the safeguarding of his neighbour's interests as well as his own, and that was his beacon-star—

> " If it be a sin to covet honour,
> I am the most offending soul alive."

Some have seen in his soliloquy in Part I. (I. i. 220), as Kreyssig remarks, also in his casuistical explanation of his removal of the crown (2 *Henry IV.*, IV. v. 95), and in his somewhat cruel banishment of old Jack Falstaff, a spirit of hypocritical opportunism. On the other hand, on coming to the throne it was necessary to break with all his former associates, if he would maintain his kingly dignity, and well did he know by past experience how difficult it was to resist the charm of the knight when he really set his mind to break down the hostility of some quondam friend. He saw to it that his " old acquaintance " was provided for, but of personal intercourse in the future there could be none between Henry and Falstaff.

The remaining characters comprising the *dramatis personæ* of this great play are too numerous for criticism in detail. Here, as elsewhere in Shakespeare's plays, there is a methodical system of contrast employed throughout. Hotspur and Prince Henry are contrasted in the results accruing from the diverse significations of the word " honour " which govern their actions. Then we have Falstaff, the ethico-social mutineer and the colossal humorist in one; the man whose sense of moral obligation is inverted or at least awry, and to whom good and evil are terms relative to the circumstances in which he may be placed; who is set over against Bolingbroke, the ethico-

political mutineer, the noble who became monarch, as Brandes puts it, to right the wrongs of a social order that was then in the melting, and who ended by establishing a worse tyranny than was possible under the former *régime*. Henry and Falstaff were both upholders of the good old rule—

> —" the ancient plan,
> That he should take who had the power,
> And he should keep who can."

They were both men of unstable ideas of honour. Theirs is neither the selfish conception of honour entertained by Hotspur, nor the selfless idea held by the Prince. Falstaff has the same opinion of society as Captain Bobadil, " All the world's mine oyster, which with my sword I'll open," only in his case his wits take the place of the braggart's sword. Henry seeks also to open the oyster of England by cajolery and chicanery, by playing off one set of men against another with a ready opportunism that shows how profoundly he had gauged the weaknesses of humanity. As Dr. Furnivall says, " In Henry IV.'s time the right doctrine of effective kingship was not accepted by the English. Nor was it so in Shakespeare's time. The power of the barons was too great. . . . But now a strong king is on the throne. What Henry has won he'll keep, let who will say nay . . . but he has to take things as he finds them, and make the best of them." In this Falstaff and he are alike!

Other contrasts are those drawn between Glendower and Douglas, Prince Henry and Prince John, Lady Percy and Lady Mortimer, also between the severely respectable *entourage* of the Court and the headlong fun and frolic, tinged at times by the sordid hues of vice, of the society at " the Boar's Head in Eastcheap," the Prince who belongs to both circles being the link of connection. Then we have the carefully differentiated and contrasted groups of Loyalists and Rebels,

each with its own peculiarities—the two parts, in a word, being one vast picture representative of the society of England in the early fifteenth century. With a truth that cannot be surpassed, and a realism that impresses by its sheer earnestness of purpose, the complete round of the social order of the age is portrayed, in the various representative types that are cited to appear, in connection with the development of the scenes of the drama.

Of the play as a whole, unquestionably the monarch that dominates every scene wherein he appears—nay, sheds the magic of his presence over every character with whom he holds intercourse, is Sir John Falstaff! Though we know him for what he is, a man as utterly destitute of moral principle as an oyster is of bones, we love him, and grieve supremely when the inevitable fiat goes forth from the newly proclaimed King, "Harry the Fifth," to his whilom comrade, "Come not near our person by ten mile." Such an ending is hard for the mighty Monarch of Humour, yet it is in keeping with the vicissitudes of his career.

Note how some of our leading critics analyse the character. "Sir John Falstaff (says Professor Dowden) is a conception scarcely less complex, hardly less wonderful than that of Hamlet. He is for ever creating a fresh series of impressions, which seems at first inconsistent with the preceding series, and which yet, after a while, somehow conciliates itself in an obscure and vital way with all that has gone before. . . . Sir John is by no means a purely comic character. Were he no more than this the stern words of Henry to his old companion would be unendurable. The central principle of Falstaff's method of living is that the facts and laws of the world may be evaded or set at defiance, if only the resources of inexhaustible wit be called upon to supply, by brilliant ingenuity, whatever deficiencies may be found in character and conduct." And in another place the same writer says:

" Falstaff supposed that by infinite play of wit, and inexhaustible resource of a genius creative of splendid mendacity, he could coruscate away the facts of life, and always remain master of the situation, by giving it a clever turn in the idea, or by playing over it with an arabesque of arch waggery." But in the face of the unalterable facts of life, truth, honour, and justice, Falstaff's evasions are futile, and the terrible fiat of the King ends at once his levity and his life. " By my troth (says Hostess Quickly), the King has killed his heart." Hazlitt, referring to his wit and humour, says: " Falstaff's wit is the emanation of a fine constitution; an exuberance of good humour and good nature; an overflowing of his love of laughter and good-fellowship; a giving vent to his heart's ease, and over-contentment with himself and others. He would not be in character were he not so fat as he is; for there is the greatest keeping in the boundless luxury of his imagination and the pampered self-indulgence of his physical appetites. He manures and nourishes his mind with jests as he does his body with sack and sugar. . . . The secret of Falstaff's wit is for the most part a masterly presence of mind, an absolute self-possession which nothing can disturb. His repartees are involuntary suggestions of his self-love: instinctive evasions of everything that threatens to interrupt the career of his triumphant jollity and self-complacency." Then Coleridge adds: " Observe the consciousness and intentionality of Falstaff's wit, so that when it does not flow of its own accord its absence is felt, and an effort visibly made to recall it. Note also throughout how Falstaff's pride is gratified in the power of influencing a prince of the blood, the heir apparent, by means of it. Hence his dislike to Prince John of Lancaster and his mortification when he finds his wit fail on him, so that he says bitterly, ' I would you had but the wit, 'twere better than your dukedom: Good faith, this same young sober-blooded

boy doth not love me; nor a man cannot make him laugh.' "

It is amid a scene of true pathos that we take leave of Jack Falstaff. Pistol says, "Falstaff is dead, and we must yearn therefore," to which Bardolph rejoins, "Would I were with him wheresome'er he is, in heaven or in hell." Whereupon Dame Quickly says, "Nay, sure, he's not in hell; he's in Arthur's bosom, if ever man went to Arthur's bosom. A' made a finer end and went away an it had been any christom child." As we part from him we feel inclined to say, in the words of Prince Hal, "Poor Jack, farewell! we could have better spared a better man," for the character must rank with the Knight of La Mancha as the most supremely humorous creation in the literature of the world.

Though based without on the character of Sir John Oldcastle, who had a place in Holinshed's *Chronicle History* and in the early play, *The Famous Victories of Henry V.*, Shakespeare does not seem to have been aware, when he appropriated the name from Holinshed, that it was actually the name of the "Lollard Martyr," better known as Lord Cobham, nor did he know that the latter had been a friend of Prince Henry before he succeeded to the throne. Shakespeare, on the facts being made known to him by the friends of Oldcastle's family, at once took steps to remedy the slight cast on the memory of a good man, and substituted the name of Sir John Fastolfe, who had the reputation of having played the coward in the French campaigns of Henry VI. In the "Epilogue" to the Second Part of *Henry IV.* he inserted the line, "For Oldcastle died a martyr, and this is not the man."

Singularly enough, another error was committed with regard to the new name. Shakespeare had been led to associate Sir John Fastolfe (1378-1459), a respectable Norfolk landowner, with the nebulous personality of a cowardly knight, who like Oldcastle

had been a Lollard, and who had owned a hostelry, not in the district of Eastcheap, however, but in that of Southwark, called "The Boar's Head Tavern." As Dr. Gairdner conclusively proves, in more than one of his valuable historical surveys of the period, Fastolfe was far from being cowardly, having highly distinguished himself in the French wars under Henry V., and been in consequence appointed lieutenant of Harfleur—another instance how a name chosen almost at random may pillory the character of a good man.

Falstaff, the dramatic hero, will, however, live while literature lasts, as the type of that imperial fund of humour which no sudden rebuff could ever stint, no repulse ever stop! He is the Colossus of the world's humour, in either ancient or modern literature, born too like his creator, not for an age but for all time. I cannot do better than conclude with the words of one of the most brilliant of eighteenth-century Shakespearian critics and essayists, who thus speaks of Falstaff: "He is a man at once young and old, enterprising and fat, a dupe and a wit, harmless and wicked, weak in principle and resolute by constitution, cowardly in appearance and brave in reality, a knave without malice, a liar without deceit, and a knight, a gentleman, and a soldier without either dignity, decency, or honour." [1] This is a string of paradoxes, yet every one teaches its own phase of the mighty truth of Falstaff's manysidedness. The secret of his amazing wit is his amazing self-possession, which nothing can disturb. As Hazlitt says, "His very size floats him out of all his difficulties, in a sea of rich conceits." [2]

[1] *Cf.* Maurice Morgann's essay, *On the Dramatic Character of Falstaff* (1777).

[2] Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*—"Henry IV.," vol. i. p. 279 (Dents' edition).

SECTION 8.—THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR. 1598

Tradition, as recorded by Rowe and Johnson, relates that in

> " One of those flights on banks of Thames
> That so did take Eliza and our James,"

Elizabeth was so delighted with Shakespeare's presentation of Falstaff in *Henry IV.* that she insisted on seeing the knight in love, and begged him not to delay long over the execution of the piece, as she was consumed by eager curiosity to see what Shakespeare would make of the only theme she had ever set a dramatic poet. John Dennis writes in 1702 of the *Merry Wives of Windsor:* " I knew very well that it had pleased one of the greatest queens that ever was in the world. . . . This comedy was written at her command and by her direction, and she was so eager to see it acted that she commanded it to be finished in fourteen days; and was afterwards, as tradition tells us, very well pleased at the representation." [1] Also Gildon in 1710 writes of the play: " The fairies in the fifth act make a handsome compliment to the Queen, in her palace of Windsor, who had obliged him [Shakespeare] to write a play of Sir John in love, and which I am very well assured he performed in a fortnight; a prodigious thing when all is so well contrived and carried on without the least confusion." [2] The outcome was the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, one of the most delightful of his social dramas, but by no means one of his best. Nevertheless, it caught on, Queen, Court, and people being charmed by it and with it, and from that day to this the play has been popular. Although the tradition may not be altogether true in what it records, the play remains—coming to us whence or how it may—a seductive

[1] In the dedicatory epistle to *The Comical Gallant.*
[2] Gildon, *Remarks on the Plays of Shakespeare.*

picture of Shakespeare's power of painting the woodland scenes of the leafy English Midlands.[1]

And yet there is some ground for the tradition. The "Epilogue" to the Second Part of *Henry IV.* says: "If you be not too much cloyed with fat meat, our humble author will continue the story with Sir John in it, and make you merry with fair Katharine of France: where for anything I know, Falstaff shall die of a sweat, unless already a' be killed with your hard opinions." This would lead us to suppose that Shakespeare intended to continue *Henry V.* in the historical vein, with Falstaff affording comic relief to the march of events. The popularity of the character on the stage would certainly have led him to adopt that course, had not his own good sense and his artistic instinct, alike warned him that Falstaff had gone far enough in humorously smiling away the dissolute excesses of the Prince, even though these excesses were the result merely of perfervid animal spirits and not of vicious inclination. To provide some other humorous element in the play, after he had decided to kill off the immortal Falstaff, was a necessity, therefore Fluellen the Welshman, with his exaggerated notions over the sacredness of truth and honour, was created.

The date of composition was, in all probability, immediately after *Henry IV.*, *i.e.* at the close of 1597 or the beginning of 1598. He had already planned out the play on "Henry V," a study of a great monarch he had long had in his mind. The presence of Falstaff in that play would have lessened the concentration of attention on the lofty character and attributes of the ideal King, which Shakespeare felt to be essential to the thorough comprehension of the qualities of a patriot-ruler. Then came the inconvenient request from the Queen. What was to be done? Shakespeare—as we know from what happened after his

[1] *Shakespeare's Woodland*, by George Morley.

retirement and sudden death [1]—had always a number of dramas on the stocks in his literary workshop. He had by him a comedy of intrigue, in which "Garmombles" was to have played the chief part. He determines to excise the latter, to insert Falstaff, and let the play run along the usual lines of a country love comedy. We shall later on consider the difference between the Falstaff of *Henry IV.* and of the *Merry Wives of Windsor.* Meantime, let it be sufficient to say they are not the same man. The play, therefore, seems to have been finished in the early spring. Shakespeare had a curious habit of dragging in the physical features of the season wherein he chanced to be writing, in order to give *vraisemblance* to the scene. Hence we have such references as—"raw rheumatic day," "Jack-a-Lent," "Take heed ere summer comes, or cuckoo birds do sing," "lisping hawthorn buds," etc.

The earliest known edition of the play is the Quarto, printed in 1602, of which the following is the title page: *A | most pleasaunt and excellent conceited Comedie, | of Sir John Falstaffe and the | Merrie Wives of Windsor. | Entermixed with sundrie variable and pleasing humours of Sir Hugh | the Welch Knight, Justice Shallow, and his | wise Cousin M. Slender. | With the swaggering vaine of Auncient | Pistoll and Corporall Nym. | By William Shakespeare. | As it hath been divers times acted by the Right Honourable | My Lord Chamberlaines Seruants, Both before her | Majestie and elsewhere. | London. | Printed by T. C. for Arthur Johnson and are to be sold at | his shop in Powles Churchyard at the signe of the Flower de Leuse and the Crowne.* A second Quarto (Q2), a reprint of the former, appeared in 1619.

Then came the first Folio edition of 1623, wherein the drama occupies pp. 39-60. There is, however, nearly double the amount of matter in the Folio as compared with that of the Quarto. Moreover, the

[1] When Fletcher was asked to complete *Henry VIII.*, *Cardenio*, *Two Noble Kinsmen*, etc.

differences between the two editions, Folio and Quarto, convey the impression that both are taken from a non-existent original, and that the latter was a garbled and hurried transcript probably issued by a piratical printer. The passage standing in the Quarto: "The Council shall know of this," has in the Folio been altered to "The King shall know," etc. Mr. P. A. Daniel contends[1] that "the character of the publishers of the Quarto, its proved omissions, its re-composed passages (*i.e.* passages not Shakespeare's work but that of the stenographer), its retention of important passages omitted in the Folio, the complication in both of the time-plot, lead almost inevitably to the conclusion that there was but one original for both Quarto and Folio." To this theory the consensus of later scholarship has now come round.

The evidence as to date from the metrical tests shows an altogether exceptional absence of rhyme in the play. In fact, it is written almost wholly in prose. Until Act III. iv. verse scarcely has place at all, and in this scene there are only twenty-three lines of it: nor do we find it recur until Act IV. iv., vi., and Act V. v. The reason for this is that given by Professor Dowden, viz., that the *Merry Wives of Windsor* is a play written expressly for the barbarian aristocrats with their hatred of ideas, their insensibility to beauty, their hard, efficient manners, and their demand for impropriety. The good folks of London preferred to see a prince or a duke, and they liked to see him made gracious and generous. These royal and noble persons at Windsor, however, for their part would rather witness the interior life of county gentlemen of the middle class, also the women of the same rank of society, with their excellent *bourgeois* morals and rough, jocose ways, while the comedy of hearing a French physician and a Welsh parson "making fritters of English" was appreciated by these spec-

[1] Introduction to his edition of the play.

tators, who uttered their mother tongue with exemplary accent.

This is the reason why little can be based on the argument from the absence of rhyme. Out of the 3018 lines in the play, there are 2703 lines of prose. Of feminine or double endings there is a percentage of 27.2, while light and weak endings are returned at one of the former and none of the latter. Of enjambed lines there is a percentage of 20.1, and of speech endings 20.5, these facts indisputably showing that Shakespeare was now slowly but steadily advancing towards the meridian of his powers. There is an almost complete absence of rhyming doggerel verse, unless in the song of Parson Evans; classical allusions also are comparatively few, while puns and conceits are not numerous. All this internal evidence tends to confirm the external evidence as to date, and places the drama midway in Shakespeare's Second Period.

The scene of this delightful play is Windsor and the immediate neighbourhood.

The time-analysis of the duration of the action of the drama is about three days, allocated as follows—

Day I. embracing Act I. Sc. i.-iv.
,, II. ,, ,, II. ,, i.-iii.; III. i.-iv., and the Quickly portion of Sc. v.
,, III. embracing the Ford portion, Act III. Sc. v.; also IV., to the end of the play.

As to the sources whence the materials for the play were drawn, in all likelihood the plot was suggested by an Italian novel, and those which Shakespeare seems to have laid under contribution were the collection of tales by Ser Giovanni Fiorentino, entitled *Il Pecorone*, in which the Second story of the First Book was the one utilised by him. Then further, there was a story from Straparola's *Notti* (iv. 1), "The Tale of the Two Lovers of Pisa," very similar to the plot of the *Merry Wives*, which Tarleton had already adapted for his *Newes out of Purgatorie*; also he probably

utilised the Fishwife's "Tale of Brainford" in the collection of stories, *Westward for Smelts*.[1] From each of these, as well as from one or two other but minor sources, Shakespeare drew the materials for this bright and healthful comedy.

The plot is an excellent one, containing both a major and a minor thread of interest. The major is that which concerns itself with Falstaff's love affairs —that spectacle which the sensation-loving Elizabeth desired so much to see. Falstaff, finding himself in Windsor, where he was lodging at the Garter Inn at the rate of ten pounds a week, and being rather low in funds, conceived the scheme of making love to Mistress Ford and Mistress Page in order to obtain money. Rather from a desire to fill his attenuated purse than from any longing to satisfy mere sensual inclination, he begins to pay court to both these ladies, who are the wives of wealthy townsmen of Windsor. "They shall be my East and West Indies, and I shall trade to them both," he says. He therefore writes a letter to each, couched in similar terms, declaring his love. The letters he would have sent by his serving-men, Nym and Pistol (who come to us from *Henry IV.* unchanged in any of their distinctive traits), but they, in an inexplicable fit of virtue (necessary, however, for the development of the drama), decline to deliver them. In consequence they are dismissed from their employment. They accordingly revenge themselves by revealing to Page and Ford what the knight was plotting against them. Page laughs at the whole affair, but Ford, who is of a very suspicious nature, considers it a good opportunity to test his wife. He therefore calls on Falstaff under the name of Brook, to egg him on in his enterprise, but also to learn the place and hour of meeting. Falstaff falls into the trap and reveals his plans. The plot is a delightful maze of cross-purposes!

[1] Reprinted for the Percy Society in 1848.

Meantime, the two ladies, healthy-minded, pure-souled matrons, determine to give their lecherous old lover a lesson. Ignorant of the fact that Ford is on the track, they make repeated assignations with him in order to punish him, of which Falstaff duly informs Ford, and nearly drives that jealous-minded husband mad by the intelligence. Twice Ford, breathing out threats against his wife, insists on his house being searched, but the wit of the two women is too much for him, and the fat knight is actually taken out under his very nose, once in a basket of foul linen, and the second time in the garb of the "Witch of Brentford." At last in Windsor Forest, where the third rendezvous is held, he is caught in the disguise of Herne the Hunter, and held up to ridicule, pinched by children whom he mistakes for fairies, and worst of all, ridiculed by a Welshman who, as he says, "makes fritters of English." Could his degradation sink lower?

He has only one consolation. "Sweet Anne Page," whom her mother wishes to marry Dr. Caius, the French physician, and whom her father had planned to marry Slender, deceives both and marries the lover of her own choice, Master Fenton. And so with happiness all round, even Falstaff the humiliated, being bidden home with the others to laugh over the sport by a country fire, this delightful comedy comes to a close.

The characters, with the exception of Falstaff, savour of the country and of rural days and ways. Ford and Page are simply two of the local gentry, fond of country sports and of substantial living, delighting in everything that tends to promote a healthy mind in a healthy body. Ford's character is tinged with jealousy, but he receives his lesson, and to his dying day will never suspect his wife again. Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page are just two happy-hearted country ladies, not too old yet that they cannot enjoy an innocent frolic, but scorning to do aught that would even tend

to cast a doubt upon the absolute rectitude of their conduct. "What an unweighed behaviour hath this Flemish drunkard picked out of my conversation that he dares in this manner assay me? He hath not been thrice in my company—I was then frugal of my mirth," Mrs. Page says to herself when she receives Falstaff's letter. Mrs. Ford is perhaps the more winsome of the two, because we do not like to see Dame Page so ready to marry her daughter to an elderly foreigner when a fine handsome son of the soil in the person of Fenton is ready to wed her.

Dr. Caius and Sir Hugh Evans are an inimitable pair in their attacks upon our luckless language, the latter making fritters of English, the former casting about his nouns, participles, and adjectives with a fine impartiality in blundering. Then there is Shallow, a typical specimen of the rustic mind which moves with slow bovine unwieldiness, prodigal in its attention to trifles, and ever inclined greatly to quarrel over the precise way to split a straw. There is no goose, however anserine, that is not a swan to some of his tribe, and Shallow has his Slender, to whom he stands for all the world's greatness and wisdom. Slender has but little to spare on this side imbecility, and perhaps it is his love of field-sports that saves him from idiocy complete. Simple, his servant, is of the same house and lineage, being probably a poor relation relegated to the station of upper servant. Then there is that "bewitching young virginity," otherwise called "Sweet Anne Page," who is of goodness and of beauty all compact. Wisely did she choose her life's mate in "Young Fenton." Verily, as the newly-wed husband puts it—

> "The offence is holy that she hath committed,
> Since therein she doth evitate and shun
> A thousand irreligious cursed hours,
> Which forced marriage would have brought upon her."

The minor characters are thus inimitably etched by

Hazlitt: "The Welsh parson, Sir Hugh Evans (a title which in those days was given to the clergy), is an excellent character in all respects. He is as respectable as he is laughable. He has very good discretions and very odd humours. The duel scene with Caius gives him an opportunity to show his cholers and his tremblings of mind, his valour, and his melancholy in an irresistible manner. In the dialogue which at the mother's request he holds with his pupil, William Page, to show his progress in learning, it is hard to say whether the simplicity of the master or the scholar is the greatest. Nym, Bardolph, and Pistol are but the shadows of what they were, and Justice Shallow himself has little of his consequence left. But his cousin, Slender, makes up for the deficiency. He is a very potent piece of imbecility. In him the pretensions of the worthy Gloucestershire family are well kept up and immortalised. He and his friend Sackerson; and his Book of Songs, and his love of Anne Page and his having nothing to say to her, can never be forgotten. It is the only first-rate character in the play: but it is in that class. Shakespeare is the only writer who was as great in describing weakness as strength."

And now what of Falstaff? This of him, that be he who he may, he is not the same man who bestrode the entire play of *Henry IV.*—a leg in either part, like a mighty Colossus! What is the reason of the change? The Falstaff of *Henry IV.* and he of the *Merry Wives* are as unlike each other as Autolycus of *A Winter's Tale* is unlike Touchstone of *As You Like It.* Why is this, and who is to blame? The shameless bundle of lust and lying which a pair of rustic yeomen-farmers and their wives are able to hoodwink, is not the brilliant wit and colossal humorist against the armour of whose superb *sang-froid* the shafts of raillery of Prince Hal and of Poins recoiled upon themselves. The man whose inventiveness soared no higher when pushed

into a corner by the discovery of his plot against the virtue of the two ladies, than to whine out like a schoolboy detected in a fault, "I do perceive that I am made an ass:" followed by, "Have I laid my brain in the sun and dried it, that it wants matter to prevent so gross an over-reaching as this?"

Would the Paladin of wit who, when exposed in so veritable an act of cowardice and falsehood as the sequel to the robbery of the carriers at Gadshill and the persistent growth of the men in buckram, made so magnificent a recovery, "By the Lord, I knew ye, as well as he that made ye: was it for me to kill the heir apparent? thou knowest I am as valiant as Hercules: but beware instinct; the lion will not touch the true prince"[1]—would he, I say, be content to stand dumfounded and to mutter out, "Well, I am your theme; you have the start of me: I am dejected?" Never! What had happened, then? Simply this, that even to England's queen Shakespeare refused to put his genius out to pawn. Well did he know the English Court, and the rank ignorance and sciolism of nine-tenths of those who would hear and criticise his play. Bring back his immortal creation from banishment or from that long last bourne whence no traveller returns, to which it was his intention to send him in *Henry V.*, whereon he was then engaged—bring him back merely to tickle for an hour the fancy of a set of courtly lords and ladies who would smile and yawn and ask, "Prithee what's it all about?" Never! He would give them a Falstaff suited to their pleasure-loving capacities: a Falstaff of farce, but not a Falstaff of fancy; a Falstaff who would submit to be tumbled out of buck-baskets into the Thames at Datchett Lane, to be cudgelled in the garb of the "Wise Woman of Brentford," and to be exposed as Herne the Hunter to the laughter of silly school children, and of Welsh parsons who made

[1] 1 *Henry IV.*, II. iv. 295.

fritters of English. No, it was not the veritable, the voluble, and the (pot-) valiant Jack Falstaff! Shakespeare's sins have come home to roost, for the "caricature sketch" of the great wit of *Henry IV.*, which its creator obviously intended should serve its turn of affording amusement to royalty and then be forgotten for ever, has been included in his works, and has afforded critics from that day to this a theme whereon to muse regarding the strange idiosyncrasies of supreme genius.

Hazlitt aptly says of the character and of the play: "The *Merry Wives of Windsor* is no doubt a very amusing play with a great deal of humour, character, and nature in it: but we should have liked it much better if any one else had been the hero of it instead of Falstaff. We could have been contented if Shakespeare had not been 'commanded to show the knight in love.' Wits and philosophers for the most part do not shine in that character, and Sir John himself by no means comes off with flying colours. Many people complain of the degradation and insults to which Don Quixote is so frequently exposed in his various adventures. But what are the unconscious indignities he suffers compared with the sensible mortifications which Falstaff is made to bring on himself? . . . Falstaff in the *Merry Wives of Windsor* is not the man he was in the two parts of *Henry IV.* His wit and eloquence have left him; instead of making a butt of others he is made a butt of by them. Neither is there a single particle of love in him to excuse his follies. He is simply a designing bare-faced knave, and an unsuccessful one." To which Gervinus adds: "An egotist like Falstaff can suffer no severer defeat than from the honesty in which he does not believe, and from the ignorance which he does not esteem."

SECTION 9.—HENRY V. 1598

The play of *Henry V.*, the eighth of the dramas of the Second Period of Shakespeare's development, takes rank also as the third of the plays composing the great trilogy of the life of Henry as Prince and King, the other two being, of course, the First and Second Parts of *Henry IV.*

The date of composition seems to have been late in 1598, as the play was produced between 17th March and 28th September 1599. This fact is proved by the reference to Essex in the Prologue or Chorus to Act V.—

> "As, by a lower but loving likelihood,
> Were now the general of our gracious empress,
> (As in good time he may) from Ireland coming,
> Bringing rebellion broachèd on his sword,
> How many would the peaceful city quit,
> To welcome him!"

Essex left for Ireland 27th March, 1599, accompanied by Shakespeare's friend and patron, Lord Southampton, and returned, without leave and in disgrace, to London in the closing days of the September of the same year. The drama was evidently completed between the dates named, and perhaps produced before the fall of Essex was known.[1] Further, the phrase, "this wooden O" (Prologue, l. 13), must refer to the "Globe Theatre," erected by Richard Burbage in 1598-9 with the materials of "The Theatre" at Shoreditch.[2] That, therefore, is another link in the chain of reference whereby the date of composition is fixed at 1598 or early in 1599.

In the Epilogue to 2 *Henry IV.*, a second play, as we saw, was distinctly promised, in which Falstaff was to appear. That plan was departed from owing

[1] *Cf.* Spedding's *Life of Bacon.*
[2] See *Early London Theatres*, by T. Fairman Ordish.

to the desire to preserve the portrait of Henry V., the hero-king and patriot-ruler, distinct and impressive. Then, too, there intervened Elizabeth's inconvenient request "to see Falstaff in love," so that *Henry V.* is really the fulfilment of the promise made in the Epilogue of 2 *Henry IV.*

The earliest known edition of the play, in print, is the Quarto of 1600, the title page of which runs as follows: *The | Chronicle | History of Henry the Fifth | with his battel fought at Agin Court | in France. Together with Auncient Pistol, | as it hath been sundry times played by the Right honourable | the Lord Chamberlaine his Servants: | London, Printed by Thomas Creede for Tho Milling | ton and John Busby; and are to be | sold at his house in Carter Lane next | the Powle Head*—1600. | The issue in question is Q1.

This edition was reprinted in 1602 and in 1608 as Q2 and Q3.

The Folio edition is entitled *The Life of Henry the Fifth*,[1] and differs very materially from the Quartos. The latter are not one-half the length of the Folio edition, being probably only an abbreviated acting version, omitting, as they do, the first scenes of Acts I. and III., the second scene of Act IV., the Choruses or Prologues, the Epilogue, as well as several of the characters. They also throw all the prose into metrical form, for no other conceivable purpose that one can imagine, than to increase the length of the matter. The Second Quarto (Q2) is a mere reprint of its predecessor (Q1) with some immaterial changes, while the Third (Q3) is a reproduction of Q2, but introduces a few corrections and emendations.

The metrical characteristics of the play, in the light they cast on the question of date, are by no means explicit in their testimony. Out of the 3320 lines constituting the total length of the piece, 1531 are in prose,

[1] It was edited in 1880 by W. G. Stone as one of the New Shakespeare Society's publications.

1678 in blank verse, leaving only 101 lines for rhyme in its various forms, and ten lines for the song sung in III. ii. 8 ff. As regards feminine or double endings, there is a total of 291, representing about 20 per cent. of the whole, while two light endings but no weak endings occur. "End-stopped" lines show a still further reduction, though less than might be expected, while "run-on" lines register 21.8 per cent., a small increase on 2 *Henry IV.*, but a decrease if compared with Part I., while if we take the percentage for the complete play, the balance is still more decidedly in favour of *Henry IV.* The "speech-ending" test gives a percentage of 18.3, a slight decrease as compared with the *Merry Wives*, but an increase upon *Henry IV.* On the other hand, doggerel lines almost wholly disappear, and the same may be said of classical allusions (unless when appropriately introduced as similes and metaphors), puns, conceits, and wit drawn out to the last filament of tenuity. The same skill in the grouping of the characters as was apparent in *Henry IV.* is not visible here; while by the introduction of a device so clumsy as a Chorus speaking a Prologue, in which the course of the action in the succeeding scenes is explained, Shakespeare shows that he has not wholly escaped from the technical limitations of his early period.

The sources whence he drew the materials of the play were mainly the second edition of Holinshed's *Chronicle*, which was not issued until late in the year 1587, and next the old play entitled *The Famous Victories of Henry V.*[1] Though here and there he has made some very immaterial deviations, on the whole he has reproduced the facts from his authorities with curious fidelity.

The scene of this patriotic play is England, in the

[1] Licensed in 1594; yet to what play did Nash allude in *Pierce Pennilesse* when he said, "What a glorious thing it is to have Henry V. represented on the stage leading the French King prisoner?" (*Cf.* W. G. Stone, *Henry V.*—New Shakespeare Society.)

immediate neighbourhood of London; then France, near Agincourt.

The time-analysis of the action of the drama is ten days with intervals, covering about six years in all, from the time Parliament opened at Leicester (30th April 1414) to Henry's betrothal to Katharine (20th May 1420)—

Day I. embracing Act I. Sc. i.-ii. In the King's palace.
Interval.
,, II. embracing ,, II. ,, i. London.
Interval.
,, III. embracing ,, II. ,, ii.-iii. Southampton, with a scene in London, Falstaff's death.
Interval.
,, IV. embracing Act II. Sc. iv. France, the King's palace.
Interval.
,, V. embracing ,, III. ,, i.-iii. At Rouen.
Interval. ,, III. ,, iv. At Rouen.
,, VI. embracing ,, III. ,, v. At Rouen.
,, VII. ,, ,, III. ,, vi.-vii. (part). Blangy, French camp near Agincourt.
,, VIII. embracing Act { III. Sc. vii. (part). Blangy, French camp near Agincourt. / IV. ,, i.-viii. Near the English camp.
Interval.
,, IX. embracing ,, V. ,, i. In France.
,, X. ,, ,, V. ,, ii. In France.

The Chorus delivers a Prologue before each act, detailing what takes place therein, and then winds up the play with an Epilogue spoken before the curtain falls.

As to the story of the drama, there is really very little of a constructive plot unfolded in it. Rather does it reveal a series of episodes strung together on the thread of the life of Henry V. While the play is destitute in a notable degree of either dramatic passion or the expression of intense emotion of any kind, it also, singularly enough, lacks any outstanding comic relief such as is afforded in *Henry IV.* by Falstaff. The humour of Fluellen and of Pistol, of Macmorris and Jamy, is of a very different type from that which centred in the conception of Falstaff's character.

What then constitutes the great charm of the play? It lies in this, that Henry, in the sheer patriotic splendour of his nature, is typical of the ideal Englishman, is, in other words, the incarnation of all that is chivalrous, courageous, noble, upright, and faithful in the English nature.[1] When duty has to be done, he does it faithfully and well, expecting no credit for it. The greatness of England was the inspiring belief of every man on the battle-field of Agincourt, from Henry to the humblest soldier who fought and bled on that great day. This homogeneity of sentiment it was that gave the victory to Henry and his men, notwithstanding the enormous odds against which they contended. The warriors looked up to their King as the ideal example of that type to which they all claimed to belong, and right through that mighty battle, there was a subtle reciprocity of stimulus constantly passing from the monarch to his men and from the men to their monarch. To warriors bound together by bands of sentiment like that, defeat was impossible. Such a contingency would have been even more marvellous than the victory itself.

The French war was undertaken by the Henry of the play not from any sordid considerations of increase of territory, but as a sacred trust committed to him by his predecessors, that he should affirm the claim of his race to the French crown (Act I. ii.). He appealed to the Archbishop of Canterbury whether, as a man believing in the retributive justice of God, he would be justified, by right and conscience, in making the claim to the kingdom of France. Whether the prelate was right or wrong in his historico-political jurisprudence, his reply was sufficient to arouse such feelings as these in the mind of the King, that if the throne of France were really his by right, then he on his part had certain duties to discharge towards it, which, God helping

[1] Rümelin, *Shakespeare-Studien*, pp. 127-131: Genée, *Shakespeare, sein Leben und seine Werke*, pp. 202-206.

him, he would discharge. He sets out in the right spirit, even if his quest were a mistaken one. To the Dauphin's insolent jest he retorted with a dignified challenge to meet him on the field, when he promised the French Prince that he would

> "dazzle all the eyes of France,
> Yea strike the Dauphin blind to look on us.
> But all this lies within the will of God,
> To whom I do appeal."

In this high and martial spirit he went forward. Just on the eve of embarkation he discovered that his familiar friend, Lord Scroop, and the two lords, Cambridge and Grey, had plotted together to kill him. Deeply though he had loved Scroop, he realised that he had his duty as a king to do, and they were all sent to execution.

So much of the play has been in England. We now pass over to Harfleur, and are introduced to the varied scenes of the English camp and to the types of warriors there. The play is really more of an epic than a drama in the minute description it gives of the men who are fighting for good King Harry—Captain Jamy, the valiant Scot; Captain Macmorris, the as valiant Irishman; Fluellen, the Welshman, with his head full of the manner in which men carried on war "according to the true and ancient prerogatives and laws of war," which are chiefly to be found "in the discipline and pristine wars of the Romans." Fluellen is one who lives in the past, a *laudator temporis acti*, a man who would die rather than smirch his honour.

The camp is painted in all its picturesque contrasts, and with great skill, Shakespeare compares the French with the English camp, the former full of riot and licence, the Dauphin and his warriors carousing, every man puffed up with the assurance of an easy victory on the morrow. Henry spends the night before the battle visiting his men, bids them "good-morrow" with a modest smile, and calls them "brothers,

friends, and countrymen." In the French camp the nobles are staking on the dice-casts the number of prisoners they hope to take on the following day.[1]

The morrow comes, and Agincourt is fought and won in a few short hours. We have then the picture of the modest conqueror, showing no exultation over his captive foes, but consoling them and serving them with a lofty courtesy. Here the play proper ends, but we have an addendum in the soldierly wooing of Henry V., who falling in love with Katharine, the daughter of the French King, a marriage was arranged which went far to heal the deadly wounds of war. The love scene between Henry and Katharine is exquisitely described, being instinct with sweetness and subtle charm.

There is really only one character in the play that takes rank as a principal personage, and that is Henry himself. If we compare the prominence assigned to him with the space given even to those most in evidence, the reader will see at once that Shakespeare intended Henry V. to be the supreme personage in this play, inasmuch as he was the type as well as the incarnation of the best qualities of Englishmen.

Henry shows no longer a trace of the Prince Hal of *Henry IV.* He has sloughed all his surface faults and follies. Besides being a brave soldier as well as an astute and careful leader, "he has become a man deeply imbued with a sense of his duty and responsibility, first to his God who has placed him in the high station he occupies, and next to the nation over which he has been called to rule."[2] His old days of ruffling it in the London taverns have not been wholly without good. They have made him a simple-hearted "man," who loves a fellow-"man" not for what he has but

[1] *Cf.* the similarity between the scene depicted in Barbour's *Bruce* of the night before Bannockburn, and compare it with this scene.

[2] Kreyssig, *Vorlesungen über Shakespeare*, pp. 212-220.

for what he is. While on occasion he is a stickler for all the pomp and ceremony of the Court being retained to the last detail of its ritual, on the eve of the Battle of Agincourt he is a fellow-man amongst his men. The King is forgotten. From old Sir Thomas Erpingham he borrows his cloak, round his men he goes at the dead of night to encourage those who may be downhearted over the terrible odds they are to encounter on the day of battle. With no high-sounding terms he heartens them, but with those plain soul-stirring words that raise courage in every bosom where courage has its home—

> "'Tis true that we are in great danger;
> The greater therefore should our courage be."

That, as Dowden says, is the very spirit to strike the fire of courage alight in other hearts, and to make heroes out of humble men. Though anxiety keeps him awake himself, he is solicitous that his men rest and be fresh. He has thought for all, but is only cruelly thoughtless of himself, so much so that twice his nobles, anxious for his welfare, sally out to find him. Ere he rejoins them he offers to "the God of Battles" that sublime prayer which more than anything else in the play stamps *Henry V.* as a great creation, whether we view it as a lyric or a dramatic masterpiece—

> "O God of battles! steel my soldiers' hearts!
> Possess them not with fear: take from them now
> The sense of reckoning, if the opposèd numbers
> Pluck their hearts from them!"

Despite all that Hazlitt with his pro-Gallic prejudices can say to depreciate him,[1] no wonder such a leader and such a man was the victor at Agincourt!

The humorous characters are all clearly yet deftly differentiated. "Ancient Pistol" is as notorious a braggart and just as arrant a coward, while Nym and

[1] Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*—"Henry V."

Bardolph stand out with the distinctness of a photograph in all their familiar yet delightful idiosyncrasies. In addition, however, we have the startlingly vivid portrait of the high-souled Fluellen, a fine study of lion-hearted courage united to simplicity and gentleness of soul. He is a worthy cousin of Sir Hugh Evans of the *Merry Wives*. Nor must Captain Jamy the Scotsman and Captain Macmorris the Irishman be forgotten, each with his own special jet of humour which plays pleasantly over all the action of the drama. Finally, there is Montjoy the French herald —supposed to be drawn from the character of the Huguenot refugee with whom Shakespeare lodged in Monkwell Street—whose sallies are infinitely delightful, and who is a valiant, true-hearted man.

Section 10.—Much Ado about Nothing. 1599

The ninth play in Shakespeare's Second Period, otherwise that of his "Maturing Art," is *Much Ado about Nothing*, the first of the three great comedies which have conferred such untold delight on countless thousands of his readers. Bright and sunlit, suffused with that joy in life which results from a keen realisation of the essential brotherhood of mankind, is the whole moral atmosphere of the play. The present drama, *As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night* are a trilogy based on man's love for man, his faith in his fidelity and intrinsic nobility.[1] During his Third Period and in the great problem-plays, Shakespeare was to realise that man had more of the villain than the saint in him. In these sunny comedies, however, he is still one who believes in the faith of his friend, and lets the world go by.

Much Ado about Nothing was probably written in the autumn of 1599, being printed in 1600. Issued in

[1] Bulthaupt, *Dramaturgie der Classiker*, vol. ii. p. 360 ff.; Lady Martin, *On some of Shakespeare's Female Characters*, p. 290 ff.

Quarto in August 1600, it had the following title page: *Much Adoe about | Nothing.—As it hath been sundrie times publikely | acted, by the Right Honorable the Lord | Chamberlaine his Servants. | Written by William Shakespeare. | London : | Printed by V. S. for Andrew Wise and | William Aspley* | 1600. |

From this one Quarto edition, which is very accurate, the Folio was reprinted, with some very slight variations. In the Folio, a list of the players is published, from which we see that William Kempe—the performer of the "Nine Days' Dance from London to Norwich"—took the part of Dogberry, and William Cowley that of Verges. It was one of the six plays of Shakespeare selected for performance at the wedding festivities of the Princess Elizabeth in 1613. Until the closing of the theatres, it continued to be in the highest degree popular. As late as 1640 Leonard Digges wrote—

> —"Let but Beatrice
> And Benedick be seene, lo in a trice,
> The cockpit, galleries, boxes, all are full."

After the Restoration, however, it appeared dull to the highly-spiced palate of the playgoers of the reign of Charles II., until it was fused by Sir W. Davenant with *Measure for Measure*, out of the union a new play, *The Law against Lovers*, being produced, which Pepys saw acted in February 1661.

The evidence of the metrical characteristics is equally direct as to date, viz., that the play was written towards the close of the Second Period in Shakespeare's artistic development. As in the case of the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, this comedy is exceptionally free from rhyme. It may, in fact, be regarded as a prose play. Out of the 2823 lines composing it, 2106 are in prose, 643 are in blank verse, while the percentage of rhyme is 5.2, as against 6.4 in the *Merry Wives*. Doggerel verse occurs scarcely at all, while we notice also a marked absence of classical allusions, of puns

and conceits, and of wire-drawn witticisms. The percentage of the feminine or double endings which occur in the play is 22.9, with one instance alike of light and weak endings. The "end-stopped" line is becoming perceptibly less frequent, while the "run-on" or enjambed line shows a percentage much the same as in *Henry V.* and the *Merry Wives*, viz., 19.37, while the speech-ending test gives a percentage of 20.7. In a word, the evidence goes to show that the development of Shakespeare's metrical technique was, for some reason, stationary at that precise moment, the advance that had taken place from *Richard II.* onward being, for the time, arrested.

The sources whence the materials of the play were drawn are almost wholly Italian. Bandello had outlined the story of *Much Ado* in his *novelle* (No. xxii.), *Timbreo di Cardona*, his heroine being styled "Fenicia." Bandello's version was rendered into French in Belleforest's *Histoires Tragiques*, Ariosto introducing it into his *Orlando Furioso* (canto v.). Ariosto's rendering of the story was translated into English by Harington in 1591, the names of the hero and heroine being Ariodante and Genevra.[1] In the *Faery Queen* the story of "Phaon and Claribel" was a treatment of the same idea as was utilised in the rejection of Hero by Claudio; while Shakespeare seems to have borrowed from Spenser suggestions for Don John and Borachio. Borrow as he might, however, the mighty genius of Shakespeare could now only improve what he touched. His taste had been cultivated by a long period of fastidious training, and

[1] There was another English translation, that by Beverley in 1565, but it was Harington's which Shakespeare in all likelihood used. The story was dramatised and was played before Queen Elizabeth, under the title *The Historie of Ariodante and Genevra*, at Shrovetide 1583. The incidents were treated of in a poem by George Turbervile. The German dramatist, Jacob Ayrer, was working at the time on the same legend, for his play *Beautiful Phœnicia.*

only those incidents, in the very highest degree adapted to serve his purpose, would be selected.

The scene of the play is laid at Messina, while the duration of the dramatic time is thus mapped out by Mr. P. A. Daniel[1]—

Day	I.	embracing Act	I.; II. i.-ii.
,,	II.	,,	,, II. Sc. iii.; III. i.-iii.
,,	III.	,,	,, III. ,, iv.-v.; IV.; V. i.-iii. (part).
,,	IV.	,,	,, V. ,, iii. (part), iv.

The story which Shakespeare has woven into the plot of *Much Ado about Nothing* is therefore partly invented by himself, as in the case of the comic underplot affecting Benedick and Beatrice, and partly taken from Italian and French sources rendered into English. The play opens at the house of Leonato, the Governor of Messina, who, with his daughter Hero and his niece Beatrice, is listening to an account from a messenger of the victory won by Don Pedro of Arragon. In this narrative, special mention is being made of a young Florentine, Claudio, who has shown great bravery in the battle. Beatrice also manifests a deep interest, veiled, however, under jests and satirical allusions, in Signor Benedick of Padua. The entry of the gentleman in question, in the company of Don Pedro, Don John, and Claudio, causes an immediate resumption of the "merry war" which, as Leonato says, always goes on between Benedick and Beatrice when they meet. He is a man of handsome exterior, of noble strain, of approved valour, and honesty, with a keen wit and a ready tongue, who has adopted an attitude of cynical contempt for love and marriage. Beatrice, to hide the rising flame of love which is beginning to show itself in her heart, out-Herods Herod in her contempt for matrimony. She fain would persuade herself that there is no blank in her nature or in her life which matrimony would fill, yet every movement she makes, every sentence she utters, proclaims the

[1] *Transactions New Shakespeare Society*, 1877-9.

opposite. A well-grounded suspicion also exists that Benedick is in a parlous case likewise as regards his heart. Fain would he argue himself into the conviction that "Dear Lady Disdain" is nothing to him! Yet he cannot leave her company; he must always be where he can see and hear her. Thus it comes about that these two are both anxious each to probe the heart of the other, but on the keenest alert to let no hint drop as to the state of their own.

Thus the merry war goes on, day in and day out, between the two.

While they are advancing towards love by the channel of deriding its effects, Claudio and Hero have fallen breast-deep into its flood. Claudio has returned from the war with many honours, and aspires to the hand of the Governor's daughter. He is, however, of a somewhat simple, easily-persuaded nature, and when Don Pedro suggests that he (Pedro) should woo Hero on his friend's behalf, the latter readily consents. This conversation has been overheard, but wrongly understood, by an attendant of Antonio. The latter, on being informed by his servant, repeats the intelligence to Leonato that Don Pedro means to woo Hero himself. Borachio, the servant of Don John, however, has overheard the true state of matters, and informs his master in turn. Don John is of the line and lineage of Iago and Iachimo. The bastard brother of Don Pedro, he is everlastingly repining at the injustice of fortune that gave to Pedro position and to himself reproach! To avenge himself on the happiness of the world is his constant desire!

To Claudio, therefore, he confides the news that Pedro is seeking Hero for himself. Without making inquiries of the most casual kind even, the poor simpleton credits a slander that smirches at once the good faith of his friend and the honour of his lady-love. Pedro, however, has discharged his rôle of go-between with eminent success. To Claudio's suit for

Hero he has won the consent of Leonato, who thus addresses the lover: "Count, take of me my daughter, and with her my fortunes." The match is made up on the spot, the marriage-day being fixed for that day week.

All this time, Benedick and Beatrice have been so severely tongue-thrashing each other that they are on the verge of a quarrel, when Don Pedro undertakes to perform one of the labours of Hercules, viz., "to bring Signor Benedick and the Lady Beatrice into a mountain of affection the one with the other." This he does by discoursing, in the hearing of Benedick, on "the enraged affection, passing the infinite of thought," wherewith Beatrice loves him; also by making Hero and Ursula lament in the hearing of Beatrice, that "so rare a gentleman as Signor Benedick" should have fallen so deeply in love with Beatrice, because she has no heart to love again. The two "wit-crackers," who are really deeply in love with each other, fall into the snare, and one part of the plot is complete.

Meantime, Don John, with Iago-like villainy, declares to Claudio that Hero, whom he was to marry on the morrow, was unchaste, pledging himself that if Don Pedro, Claudio, and others will come with him to a convenient spot they will see Hero late at night in converse with another man.

They agree to go that very night to test the truth of the report. They do so, and by Don John's machinations, Claudio is led to believe that he sees his betrothed bride, Hero, in familiar converse with another man, under cover of night, and on the eve of her marriage.

On the morrow, when Hero is brought to the altar to be married, she is repudiated by Claudio as an untrue woman, notwithstanding her protestations. More dead than alive, poor Hero is led away by her father, the only voices raised in her favour being that of the friar who was to have performed the ceremony,

Beatrice, and Benedick, even her father believing in her guilt. After the others had gone, Beatrice and Benedick remain behind. Gradually they unfold their hearts to each other and plight their mutual troth, after which the latter, for the sake of his lady-love's kinswoman, undertakes to challenge Claudio to a duel to the death.

Just then the "Watch"—the inimitable Dogberry and Verges—come in, bringing the two prisoners they have apprehended, Borachio and Conrade, who confess, on hearing that Don John had fled from Messina, that he had suborned them to accuse the Lady Hero wrongfully, also that it was Margaret, one of Hero's gentlewomen, clad in her mistress's attire, whom they had seen talking with Borachio.

By the friar's advice, Hero had intended to die to the world, or, in other words, to remain in absolute seclusion, until she could prove her innocence. The report had therefore been published that she was dead.

Claudio and Don Pedro, though they at first sneer at the action taken by Benedick and Leonato, on the facts being laid before them that were elicited by the "Watch," are overwhelmed by grief. They are ready and eager to make any reparation to Leonato. The old man replies that he has a niece living—almost a "copy" of his child that died, and that Claudio's punishment shall be to wed her at once in Hero's stead. Claudio, without demur, accepts the proposal, and on the morrow, when his bride unveils after the ceremony, he discovers that it is his original Hero whom he has married, dead only while the slander against her honour lived.

The characters are one and all finely and forcibly drawn. True, many of them are of subordinate importance. Not one of these, however, but exhibits both genius in conception and unwearied care in execution, that every necessary quality be supplied to differentiate the portraits from each other. Don

Pedro, the noble and chivalrous Prince of Arragon, is a high-souled, generous-hearted gentleman, with a horror of impurity in thought, word, and deed. Hence his unsympathetic attitude to poor old Leonato when, crazed with sorrow over his child's shame, he comes to challenge Claudio to combat. Yet how absolute is his repentance when the true facts are revealed. His big heart wells over in sympathetic humiliation that his brother Don John should have been guilty of such a deed, and that he, the Prince, should have been induced to credit so gross a slander against the betrothed of his friend.

Of his brother, Don John, the bastard, suffice to say he is bastard by birth and dastard by inclination. Conscious of his own moral depravity of soul, through sheer love of evil, he seeks to blast the good name and fair fame of all who seem to be happy. He is of kin, however, rather to the vile-minded Thersites than to the acute-witted Iago. As the German Bulthaupt aptly says, "He is a thoroughly ill-natured, bitter, revengeful scoundrel, whose passions are too sordid for any heroic crime—a gloomy, isolated egotist. His schemes are concocted in the darkest secrecy: he is afraid to carry them out, and escapes responsibility for them by flight."

Next in order comes Leonato, a parent so feeble in moral stamina that he resigns himself to a belief in his daughter's shame, on evidence the most insufficient, simply because the charge has been laid by those prominent in social station: with equal facileness, and without further proof that we can as yet see, he is re-converted to a conviction of her innocence. Swayed by superficial sentiment and sudden impulse, he is often in the wrong, but his kindliness of heart covers many faults. Borachio and Conrade are simply the vile tools of the master-mind, Don John. When he, realising detection to be imminent, flees from Messina, they, without him, can do nothing, but

fall into a fit of conscience-stricken remorse, in which they confess all to the "Watch." Their fate is the fate of all tools that put honour secondary to personal advantage. The only source of regret is that the chief criminal escapes scot-free.

Dogberry and Verges are a delightful pair! For "fine derangement of epitaphs" they as much excel Mrs. Malaprop as she herself excels all others. There is a deeper note of humorous characterisation sounded in them than was ever possible to the brilliant author of the *Rivals*. Dogberry is a humorous reasoner in his own inverted topsy-turvy way. He has a philosophy of life and a plan of law and order present inside his thick old skull, while Mrs. Malaprop is simply a fun-maker pure and simple. Henry Giles says of Dogberry: "He is, I am persuaded, of an ample size. No small man speaks with his sedate gravity. There is a steadiness of bearing in him which you never observe in men of deficient length, breadth, and rotundity. . . . No man of the lean dwarfish species could assume the tranquil self-consequence of a Dogberry."

We come now to consider Hero, a portrait of exquisite sweetness and pathetic charm. Though possessing less individuality than Beatrice, and less strength of character, she is much more amiable and fascinating. Intellectually she stands far below her cousin, and cannot, like her, estimate the relative weight of probabilities. A moment's reflection should have enabled her to disprove Don John's infamous scheme by a flat denial. Fair fame, however, was to her so pure a flower, that a single breath against her good name struck her dumb, and withered her life at the roots, because it affected the life of her love, and, to her, love was life. The fair fame of her love being smirched, all the white flower of her life died also, so that the friar was right in his contention, when he said, that for her life to continue after her love had died out in

sin, was impossible, and that therefore she must be innocent of the foul charge!

Claudio, despite all his courtly politeness and polished elegance, cannot escape the imputation that his conduct towards Hero savours more of the superficial, flighty boy than of the high-souled, chivalrous gentleman, who had come to realise what a priceless treasure the love of a true, pure woman was to any man. In the immaculateness of their mutual love, which ought to have been a buckler to his soul, rendering him invulnerable to all the shafts of slander, come whence they might, Claudio permitted these shafts to find a lodgment, and they poisoned his trust. Fortunately he possessed a soul open to conviction, and through penitence came his recompense. Claudio's lesson was a severe one, but it revolutionised his entire moral nature.

Unquestionably, however, the play derives its principal charm from the brilliant interplay of the natures of Benedick and Beatrice. Amongst the great characters of the representative comedies of the world, these two stand out as by no means the least delightful. Despite all her "sharp-tonguedness" and keenness of satire, despite too all his irony and biting ridicule, there is just as little of shrewishness in Beatrice's nature as there is of the mere captious critic in that of Benedick. They both love wit rather as armour of concealment than as a weapon of offence, and will yet settle down into an ideal married pair, because they both cherish the white flower of self-respect untainted by obtrusive egotism. Essentially shy as they both are, they don the armour of wit to veil their self-consciousness from the prying eyes of the world. Only when Beatrice realised that Benedick, like herself, was a lonely spirit amid a multitude of alien souls, did she raise the vizor of her heart and reveal to Benedick the intrinsic affinity that existed between them. Then truly did each realise of the

other that the other was the ideal of sweetness and of light for which they had both so long been looking. In Beatrice, Benedick beheld a dainty grace of manner coupled with a shy, shrinking reserve, veiling the pure and holy secrets of a charming woman's inner soul: in him, she recognised a chivalrous courage and a lofty love of truth, that considered all influences in life as naught that did not make for purifying the soul from low ideals to worship the highest and the best.

Of this noble pair the acute German critic, E. W. Sievers, says: "How do Benedick and Beatrice so readily fall into the trap laid for them? Shakespeare tells us the reason plainly enough. It lies in every human being's temperament, that no self-poise, no steadfastness can save from vulnerability in some one spot. If his temperament be normal and not degenerate, man must always *be susceptible to the joy of being beloved.* Beatrice and Benedick make shipwreck upon this characteristic of human personality. . . . Don Pedro contrives to influence the antagonistic personalities of the twain, and though their attitude hitherto has been outwardly almost hostile, to make lovers of them. He contrives it by forcing them to overhear each something of the other. By this one stroke of art, at the very outset, he robs them of all their peculiar advantages. Their wit, their readiness of tongue, all their mental dexterity and volubility, in short, every offensive and defensive weapon of which they have hitherto made use, to ward off the danger of any deep impression, is useless to them: they are condemned to complete passivity, and eventually to surrender at discretion."

To this Mrs. Jameson adds: "Beatrice, though wilful, is not wayward. She is volatile, not unfeeling. She has not only an exuberance of wit and gaiety, but of heart and soul. Shakespeare has contrived that the poetry of the character shall not only soften but heighten its comic effect. We are not only inclined

to forgive Beatrice all her scornful airs, all her biting jests, but they amuse and delight us the more when we find her, with all the headlong simplicity of a child, falling at once into the snare laid for her affections. Any woman might love such a cavalier as Benedick and be proud of his affection; his valour, his wit, and his gaiety sit so gracefully upon him."

SECTION II.—AS YOU LIKE IT. 1599

Than *As You Like It* Shakespeare never wrote anything more captivatingly seductive. Not only from start to finish does it savour of the "merrie greenwood," of English dales and dells, and of those woodland and rural sports and pastimes so dear to the imagination of Englishmen, but the characters are those that have been familiar to them from the days of "Robin Hood and his gay meinie, in Sherwood's forest green."

Though the "Forest of Arden" is left judiciously indefinite as to location, it is an English scene that is depicted—such a scene, indeed, as Shakespeare must have wandered through many a time, when he was fleeting the time carelessly in the golden season of youth, amid the great woods which then covered a large part of the shires of Warwick, Worcester, Leicester, and Stafford.[1] The geographical "Forest of Arden," or "Ardennes," was, of course, situate in the north-east of France, in that district lying between the Meuse and the Moselle. The Warwickshire "Forest of Arden" it was, however,—to which, by the way, Drayton refers in his *Polyolbion*—that presented itself to the mind's eye of poet and playgoer alike in this charmingly idyllic piece, the landscape features in it being the familiar ones of an English

[1] See *Shakespeare's Homeland*, by W. S. Brassington, for full and accurate details on this question.

woodland scene in the Midlands, not those of its French counterpart.

The date of composition was 1599. Written in haste, probably, to supply some sudden stage need, it reveals faults here and there suggestive of lack of time for revision. For example, Le Beau alludes to Celia as the "taller" of the two ladies who were at the wrestling match (I. ii. 284). Rosalind, however, in the next scene, speaks of herself as "more than common tall" (I. iii. 117). Further, in the first act, the second son of Sir Rowland de Boys is styled Jaques—a name, however, given to the moralist friend of the banished Duke, while "the second son" is termed in the last act of the Folio, "the second brother." Again, in I. ii. 87 the words "Old Frederick your father" are meaningless. In the Folio they are addressed to Rosalind, but are entirely beside the sense, since neither the banished Duke nor the usurper can claim the name. By some critics the speech has been altered to read, "Old Ferdinand, your father." That change throws little light on the difficulty.

The play was not printed until the appearance of the Folio edition of 1623, permission for the issue of a Quarto edition, asked for on 4th August 1600, being refused—a prohibition never withdrawn in its case, though withdrawn as regards *Much Ado about Nothing* and *Henry V.*, applied for at the same time. The application for the permit is one of the principal guides we follow in fixing the date of composition. Other auxiliary facts are Shakespeare's noble reference to his early friend and rival, Christopher Marlowe—

> "Dead shepherd, now I find thy saw of might,
> Whoever loved that loved not at first sight?"

The quotation is taken from Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, issued in 1598—

> "Where both deliberate the love is slight;
> Whoever loved that loved not at first sight?"

Further evidences, though of a minor character, also appear in I. ii. 79, "Since the little wit that fools have was silenced," which may refer to the burning of satirical books by public authority on 1st June 1599; while the words (IV. i. 129), "like Diana in the fountain," may allude to a fountain with a statue of alabaster upon it, erected on the Eleanor cross in Cheapside in 1596.[1]

As to the evidence regarding date, drawn from the metrical tests applied to the play, these would assign it to a position between *Much Ado about Nothing* and *Twelfth Night*. First as to the presence of rhyme. Out of the 2904 lines composing the play, 1681 lines are in prose, 925 in blank verse, while only 71 pentametric lines occur in the piece. Rhyme, therefore, is present in the play only to an extent of 6.3 per cent. As to rhymed doggerel, of that there is very little, what there is occurring mostly in the songs, Jaques's "catch" being a good example—

> "If it do come to pass,
> That any man turn ass,
> Leaving his wealth and ease,
> A stubborn will to please,
> *Ducdame, ducdame, ducdame;*
> Here shall he see
> Gross fools as he
> An if he will come to me."

The hunting catch, "What shall he have who killed the deer?" is another example of the same type of verse.[2]

Feminine or double endings show an increase upon those in *Much Ado about Nothing* of nearly 3 per cent., the respective numbers being 22.9 per cent. as against 25 per cent. As regards light and weak endings, there are only two cases of the former but none of the latter visible in *As You Like It*, while in the matter of "end-stopped" as against enjambed or "run-on" lines,

[1] Stow's *Survey*, p. 484 (edition 1618).
[2] *Cf.* Konig, *Der Vers in Shakspere's Dramen*, pp. 130-138.

singularly enough there are fewer examples of *enjambement* here, viz., 17.1 per cent., than in any other play of this period, save the two early ones, the *Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Romeo and Juliet*.[1] As regards the speech-ending test—based on this peculiarity, that in his earlier pieces Shakespeare was accustomed to make the endings of speeches coincident with the verse endings, a habit gradually discontinued in all his post-*Julius Cæsar* plays—that test gives a result of 21.6 per cent. as against 20.7 per cent. for *Much Ado*, 18.3 per cent. for *Henry V.*, and 20.5 per cent. for the *Merry Wives*. Of classical allusions, puns, and conceits there is a recrudescence in *As You Like It*, after they had in some measure disappeared in the later plays of the Second Period. From the evidence of the metrical tests, therefore, the net result gained is a little uncertain, owing to the play combining in itself features referable alike to a somewhat early and a late period.

The sources whence the materials for the play were drawn may briefly be stated as follows: (1) The *Rosalynde, or Euphues' Golden Legacy*, by Thomas Lodge, published in 1590. To that ripe scholar and delightful poet and dramatist Shakespeare was already indebted, for the *Venus and Adonis* owed much, as we saw, to Lodge's *Scillæ's Metamorphosis*. In all likelihood, Lodge was one of the circle of friends which Shakespeare had gathered around him in his Monkwell Street home, and the *Rosalynde* would be a book after his own heart. Based as it was on Sidney's *Arcadia*, also on Lyly's *Euphues*, two works which influenced English literature far more saliently than was warranted by their intrinsic worth, it opened up to Shakespeare a vein of pure romance, whereof he was not slow to take advantage. (2) He may, also, have read a book to which Lodge, in his turn, owed much, the *Gamelyn*, a fourteenth-century metrical

[1] See Metrical Table at the end of the volume.

romance, that had supplied Chaucer with the *Cook's Tale* for that marvellous series of stories told by the Canterbury Pilgrims during their immortal journey to the city of "the holy martyr."

We have seen that the *locale* of the drama was the Forest of Arden, all the characteristics of scene and sound being those native to the pure Warwickshire woodlands. The season is, of course, that charming spring and summer which prevail in so many of Shakespeare's plays, a period which seems to begin with May Day and to last until early autumn has come crowned with fruits and flowers, when the "sunburnt sicklemen of August weary" wipe their moist brows and long for some such draught as that immortalised by the most Shakespearian of all the nineteenth-century poets—

> "O for a draught of vintage that hath been
> Cool'd for a long age in the deep delv'd earth,
> Tasting of Flora and the country green,
> Dance and Provençal song and sunburnt mirth."[1]

The time-analysis of the play cannot be given very exactly. The nearest approach to accuracy has been attained by Mr. P. A. Daniel, who has mapped out the following scheme of the duration of the action of the drama[2]—

Day	I.	embracing Act I. Sc.	i.
	II.	,, ,, I. ,,	ii.-iii.; II. i. [III. iii.].
	III.	,, ,, II. ,,	ii. [III. i.]; Interval of a few days.
		The journey to Arden intervenes.	
	IV.	embracing Act II. Sc.	iv.
	V.	,, ,, II. ,,	v.-vii.; Interval.
	VI.	III.	ii.; Interval.
	VII.	III.	iii.
	VIII.	III.	iv.-v.; IV. i.-iii.; V. i.
	IX.	V.	ii.-iii.
	X.	V.	iv.

The plot is not a very ingenious one. It suits the

[1] John Keats, *Ode to a Nightingale.*
[2] Daniel, *New Shakespeare Society's Transactions.*

type of play, however, to which the piece belongs, as one of character rather than of circumstance. The reigning Duke of some "Weissnichtwo" over the seas of imagination, has been exiled by Frederick, his usurping brother. He betakes himself, therefore, with the friends who share his banishment, to a spot called the "Forest of Arden." Hither come to him men from all quarters, to live in the woods and "fleet the time carelessly as they did in the golden world," suffering no trouble save the icy fang and churlish chiding of the winter's wind. The usurper, however, allows the daughter of the banished Duke to remain at his Court as companion to his daughter. One of the most honoured of the former Duke's friends had been Sir Rowland de Boys.[1] This good old knight had recently died, leaving three sons, Oliver, Jaques, and Orlando, the first named of whom had now inherited the family honours. In place, however, of training up his youngest brother in all noble and chivalric exercises, being jealous of the love manifested towards him by all, he suffered him to grow up, in mien and manners, almost like a peasant, by withholding from him the knowledge of all gentleman-like customs and qualities. The youth's innate sense of courteous demeanour, added to his strain of gentle blood, kept him from degenerating, despite his disadvantages.

Curiously enough, in the Warwickshire "Forest of Arden" the Manor of Weston was held by the family of De Bosco or De Boys, one of whom, Sir Roland de Boys, may have suggested Shakespeare's characters. Oliver de Boys and Orlando quarrel over the treatment meted out to the latter, and poor old Adam, one of the servants, presuming to interfere, is dismissed by Oliver, who, however, gets a sound thrashing from his brother.

Just then a wrestling match is announced to be held

[1] Maginn, *Shakespeare Papers*, p. 67.

before the usurper and his Court, at which Charles, a famous athlete, is to challenge all comers. Orlando enters, but Charles, unwilling to hurt a brother of Oliver de Boys, from whom he had received favours, warns the latter to keep him back. Oliver, however, instigates Charles to do him all the injury he can. The match comes off, but it is Charles who is carried senseless from the field. At this gathering, Rosalind, the niece of the usurper and the daughter of the banished Duke, falls in love with Orlando, and gives him a chain, telling the youth he has overthrown more than his enemies.

Duke Frederick, alarmed by the favour shown to Rosalind by the people, orders her to leave the Court at once, and Celia, his daughter, not to be separated from her, secretly goes with her to seek the banished Duke in the Forest of Arden. Rosalind disguises herself in male apparel and calls herself Ganymede, while Celia puts on mean attire and stains her complexion with the juice of a berry. Attended only by Touchstone, "the clownish fool out of the Court," having gathered together their jewels and belongings, they steal away on their journey. Just then, Orlando, accompanied by old Adam, the serving-man, leaves the Court also, instigated so to do by the dark jealousy of the usurping Duke.

The course of the play thereafter is simply a description, by a series of exquisitely truthful and vividly painted pictures, of the Arcadian existence passed by the banished Duke and his companions in the Forest of Arden. Thither Orlando brings Adam, to be kindly received, both of them, by their rightful prince. Thither also come Rosalind and Celia (otherwise Ganymede and Aliena), and they, having bought a cottage, with its flocks and sheepcote, and hired the shepherd to boot, settle down likewise to an idyllic life in the forest. Presently they meet with Orlando, who is "chin-deep in love," and burdens the trees with

rhymes on Rosalind, which the lady herself, under the disguise of Ganymede, reads with open flouts, but secret delight and appreciation. Ere long they are joined by Orlando's eldest brother, Oliver, who also having been banished by the usurping Duke, now comes to beg Orlando to forgive him for his unfraternal conduct. Orlando saves his life from a lioness, but in doing so is wounded, and sends Oliver to explain why he cannot as usual meet with Ganymede and Aliena. Rosalind (or Ganymede) nearly betrays her sex by swooning, but Oliver is drinking such deep draughts of love from the eyes of Celia (or Aliena) that his suspicions do not seem to be then aroused.

The main thread of the plot here divides into two. A country maiden named Phœbe has fallen in love with Rosalind (or Ganymede) in her male attire, although an honest fellow in her own station, Silvius, is desperately in love with her. Rosalind leads Phœbe on until she gets her to promise to marry Silvius if she (Phœbe) should refuse to marry Rosalind as Ganymede. At the same time she winds in the other thread of the plot, that of her own relations with Orlando. Then the all-round *denouement* comes. Oliver and Celia are made one, so too Orlando and Rosalind, and Touchstone and Audrey, while Phœbe, realising that Rosalind is a woman, weds Silvius. The banished Duke recovers his daughter, while Oliver declares his intention of renouncing rank and lands, settling them upon Orlando, and taking up house with Celia at the sheepcote. Just then Jaques de Boys enters with the intelligence that—

> " Duke Frederick, hearing how that every day
> Men of great worth resorted to this forest,
> Address'd a mighty power; which were on foot,
> In his own conduct, purposely to take
> His brother here, and put him to the sword:
> And to the skirts of this wild wood he came,
> Where, meeting with an old religious man,
> After some question with him, was converted

> Both from his enterprise, and from the world:
> His crown bequeathing to his banish'd brother,
> And all their lands restor'd to them again,
> That were with him exil'd."

Such is the plot of *As You Like It*, and thus does it end amid general happiness and peace. Of the play as a whole Hazlitt says: "It is the most ideal of any of this author's plays. It is a pastoral drama in which the interest arises more out of the sentiments and characters than out of the actions and situations. It is not what is done but what is said that claims our attention. Nursed in solitude, 'under the shade of melancholy boughs,' the imagination grows soft and delicate, and the wit runs riot in idleness, like a spoilt child that is never sent to school. Caprice and fancy reign and revel here, and stern necessity is banished to the Court. Never was there such beautiful moralising, equally free from pedantry or petulance. Within the sequestered and romantic glades of the Forest of Arden they find leisure to be good and wise, and to play the fool and fall in love."

To this Hallam adds: "Few comedies are more generally pleasing, and its manifold improbabilities do not much affect us in perusal;" and Dowden follows: "Shakespeare when he had completed his English historical plays needed rest for his imagination, and in such a mood, craving refreshment and recreation, he wrote *As You Like It*. It is the sweetest and happiest of all Shakespeare's comedies. No one suffers: no one lives an eager intense life. Shakespeare when he wrote this play was himself in his Forest of Arden. He had ended one great ambition —the historical plays—and had not commenced his tragedies. It was a resting-place. He sends his imagination into the woods to find repose." Finally, Furnivall says: "The picture is not painted in the same high key of colour as *Much Ado*. Instead of the hot sun of Beatrice and Benedick's sharp wit-combats,

with its golden reds and yellows, backed by the dark clouds of Hero's terrible distress, we have a picture of greys and greens and blues lit through by a soft haze of silvery light, while Rosalind's rippling laugh comes to us from the far-off forest glades."

Now as to the characters. The two Dukes are well-contrasted personages. The elder (called Duke Senior), otherwise he who was banished, is a noble, stately figure, conferring dignity on his position by the dynamic influence of his impressive personality. Affable without showing undue familiarity, trustful without being careless, sympathetic towards suffering or distress without being patronising or intrusive, he attracts all and sundry by the magnetism of a just, sincere, and eminently truth-loving nature. The usurper is, in all points, precisely the opposite. Seeking to extort respect and reverence without deserving it, suspecting evil and treachery where none exists, he drives those who would be faithful to him into enmity by his persistent lack of confidence in them. To him a smiling and a scowling face are alike evidence of hostile intentions. On the contrast between the two brothers, W. W. Lloyd remarks: "The usurper pays the penalties of a falsely assumed position. His very lords characterise him justly when they speak in an undertone and warn away from the range of his passion those whom he is fitfully incensed against. Thus in every form of loyalty, compassion, duty, and affection, whether spirited, tender, sentimental, or grotesque, the better spirits fly, as they do here, by natural attraction, to a more congenial centre, and in all happy companionship. The lords Amiens, Jaques, and the pages, tender free duty to an exiled master." And Gervinus adds: "Duke Frederick is called, even by his daughter, a man of harsh and envious mind: he appears to be perpetually actuated by gloomy fancies, by suspicion and mistrust, and to be urged on by covetousness. On the other hand, the deposed Duke

and his companions spend their days in hunting, singing, and meditation. Thus withdrawn from the dangers of 'the envious Court,' they have learned to love exile beyond the painted pomp of the palace; endowed with patience and contentment, they have translated 'the stubbornness of fortune' into so quiet and so sweet a style, and sweet appear to them 'the uses of adversity.'"

Le Beau is a supple courtier, whose loyalty is like that of the Vicar of Bray, "Let him who will be Duke, he shall keep his post at Court." Grains of kindness, however, are still intermingled with the hard bedrock of his expediency-loving nature. He cannot bear to see Orlando and Rosalind come to evil, because from their parents he has received ancient kindnesses. He therefore warns them both of the Duke's dislike and the advisability of departure. He is not all surface falseness. A kindly heart beats somewhere beneath his doublet, but it is so overlaid with self-love and selfish expediency that its existence would be hard to guess unless for a kindly act now and again. Le Beau has served the usurping Frederick with just as much fidelity as he displayed towards the rightful Duke. Probably, when the latter regained his own, after the sudden ethical *volte-face* of his brother, Le Beau would be found quite as supple and eager in welcoming back his old master and in fulfilling his behests.

Oliver de Boys, the eldest of Sir Rowland's sons, is a typical example of the cowardly bully, whom the toadying and flattery of unwise friends and dependents have caused to think that the world has been made for his convenience and pleasure. To do an act of kindness that would not advantage himself never seems to enter his mind. He is the typically selfish man. Yet his faults are surface faults, the effect of evil companions and of a will that has never experienced the pleasure of self-sacrifice. In the hard

school of adversity he comes to realise the loathsomeness of his former conduct, when the great law of retaliation brings his evil treatment of Orlando down upon his own head, at the hands of the usurping Duke. As the latter realises the treachery of his action towards his brother, the rightful Duke, when confronted with possible defeat at the hands of the great numbers of worthy men who daily resort to the banished Duke, so Oliver, when he becomes a beggar, learns the true significance of the lesson of doing unto others as he would they should do unto him. The courage of Orlando, in risking his life in the slaughter of the lioness, for the man who would fain have taken his, completes the moral cure. Jaques, his brother, is but a name and nothing more, his function being to bring the news of the usurping Duke's conversion to the paths of rectitude, his abdication of his illegally assumed dignities, and his determination to assume the religious life. Of Oliver de Boys, Gervinus says: "There flows in him the same vein of avarice and envy as in the Duke. He strives to plunder his brother of his poor inheritance, he undermines his education and gentility, he first endeavours to stifle his mind, and then he lays snares for his life: all this he does from an undefined hatred of the youth, whom he is obliged to confess is full of noble device, but who for this very reason draws away the love of all his people from Oliver himself."

What can be more delightful than the love-episode of Silvius and Phœbe, within the greater love-epos of Rosalind and Orlando? Silvius and Corin are typical shepherds, bringing into the romantic Arcadianism of the play, the true pastoral flavour of sheepcotes and lambing, of rams and ewes, and the delightfully rustic point of view from which they both consider everything. Two characters more typical of Pan and Silvanus and of the idyllic life of flock-tenders in the good old days have rarely been created in any literature. The only

possible rivals to the scenes in *As You Like It* are the chapters in *Don Quixote* which recount the visit of the knight and Sancho to the goatherds, also that section of Sidney's *Arcadia* which describes the establishment of Damœtas, the herdsman and chief shepherd of King Basilius. Phœbe, as compared with the glorious Rosalind, is but a coquettish country lass playing off her rustic wiles on her bucolic mate, the worthy Silvius. She has notions decidedly above her station, but after the lesson she receives from Rosalind, she will doubtless settle down into a loving and contented wife.

In Adam and in Dennis we have another of those admirable contrasts of character which enforce a lesson by their very presence in the story. The former is compact of all that is faithful and self-sacrificing, honourable, and straightforward: the latter may be styled a synonym for time-serving. Well suited to each other are he and Le Beau, though he has not that strain of kindly remembrance of old friends which relieved by a single ray of sunny altruism the sombre selfishness of the courtier's action throughout. Adam risked everything in striving to pour oil on the feud of his two young masters, Oliver and Orlando, and seemingly lost all when he lost his situation. Yet did he not recover more than his all, when Orlando, whom he had faithfully followed into banishment, and to whom he had given his life's savings (500 crowns), married the daughter of the banished Duke, who was immediately thereafter restored to his honours and dominions. Dennis, on the other hand, who doubtless thought he was conserving all his interests by his expediency-prompted policy in clinging to the usurping Duke, would assuredly lose all "when the Duke enjoyed his own again." Time brings in his revenges when least looked for!

In Jaques we have, as Hazlitt says, "the only purely contemplative character in Shakespeare. He

thinks and does nothing. His whole occupation is to amuse his mind, and he is totally regardless of his body and his fortunes. He is the prince of philosophical idlers; his only passion is thought; he sets no value on anything but as it serves as food for reflection. . . . He resents Orlando's passion for Rosalind as some disparagement of his own passion for abstract truth; and he leaves the [banished] Duke as soon as he is restored to his sovereignty, to seek his brother out who has quitted it and turned hermit."

To the above Maginn adds: "Who or what Jaques was before he makes his appearance in the forest, Shakespeare does not inform us any further than that he had been a *roué* of considerable note, as the banished Duke tells him when he proposes 'to cleanse the foul body of the infected world.' . . . When Rosalind tells him that he is considered to be a melancholy fellow, he is hard put to it to describe in what his melancholy consists (IV. i. 11–20). He is nothing more than an idle gentleman, given to musing and making invectives against the affairs of the world, which are more remarkable for the poetry of their style and expression than the pungency of their satire. His famous description of the 'Seven Ages' is that of a man who has seen but little to complain of in his career through life. . . . All the characters in Jaques's sketch are well taken care of, and such pictures of life do not proceed from a man very heavy of heart. . . . Shakespeare designed Jaques to be a maker of fine sentiments, a dresser-forth in sweet language of the ordinary commonplaces, or the commonplace mishaps of mankind, and he takes care to show us that he did not intend him for anything else beside."

Dowden aptly says of the character: "Of real melancholy there is none in the play, for the melancholy of Jaques is not grave and earnest, but sentimental, a self-indulgent humour, a petted foible of

character. . . . Jaques has been no more than a curious experimenter in libertinism, for the sake of adding an experience of madness and folly to the store of various superficial experiences which constitute his unpractical foolery of wisdom"

To sum up the character in a word, he is a shrewd observer of life and a sharp satirico-didactic critic thereupon, rather than a wit. He moralises on men and things from an ironical point of view rather than directly ridicules the faults and foibles of his fellows. To him there is no betterment to be expected in life itself: the one betterment is getting out of it when the "strange eventful history is ended."

Over against Jaques stands Touchstone, "the clownish fool," yet the true and subtle humorist, for humour is the Ithuriel spear whose touch sets all the deep facts of life at their proper perspective and in their true setting. Well does Theodore Watts-Dunton say in his valuable essay on *The Renascence of Wonder in Poetry*, that "a recognition and an enjoyment of *incongruity* is the basis of both absolute and relative humour, the latter being the incongruity of some departure from the laws of convention, while the former—that of absolute humour—is the incongruity of some departure from the normal as fixed by Nature herself." These great definitions strike out the distinction between absolute humour, which finds its incarnation in Falstaff, and relative humour, whose aptest representative is Touchstone. Keeping that distinction in mind, we find that the latter is at the very opposite pole of experience from Jaques, the satirico-didactic philosopher. The latter seeks to see things in their relations to himself; Touchstone, in their relations among themselves and to his fellow-men. To him the essential truth of things-in-themselves is of infinitely greater importance than their passing modes or fashions, or to put it still plainer, the relativity of human knowledge or whence our ideas

of arything come, are of infinitesimally small account compared with the truth or otherwise of the thing-in-itself. The former is the philosopher's view, the latter the humorist's, for it is the incongruities or "awrinesses" of things-in-themselves that provide the humorist with his material. Touchstone's answer to Jaques (who apparently did not at first detect the double meaning in his remark), "Call me not fool till heaven hath sent me fortune," hits off in the happiest possible manner this difference between the contemplative philosopher and the observant humorist. Jaques cannot seemingly realise that humour feeds on incongruities, and, in consequence of this failure to understand him, he passes the quite inept criticism on Touchstone, that "his brain is as dry as the remainder biscuit after a voyage," though he has to add that in that same brain "he hath strange places crammed with observation." It is worthy of note in this connection that Shakespeare only once brings Jaques and Touchstone into direct discussion (III. iii. 67), though the former reports the outlines of another conversation (II. vii. 14). Possibly he may have realised that a nature so completely enamoured of the subjective as that of Jaques, could have little in common with one so steeped in the real and the objective as that of Touchstone.

Than Celia, Shakespeare has limned few more bewitching and charming women. She is the typical instance in his great gallery of those gentle, unobtrusive ladies who, by their meekness and mildness, diffuse an atmosphere of love and peace around them, go where they may. With little distinctive individuality about her like a Rosalind or a Beatrice, she is just the woman to captivate nine men out of every ten by the vision of domestic comfort and happiness which her personality as an unselfish wife inevitably suggests. As Cowden Clarke says: "Celia's charm of goodness wins the unkind brother of Orlando (Oliver)

to a passionate admiration of herself, at the same time that it excites his emulation to become worthy of her." It begins by teaching him the bravery of a candid avowal of his crime—the first step towards reformation. Celia's loving-kindness, like all true loving-kindness, hath this twofold virtue and grace, it no less benefits her friends than adorns herself.

To consider Orlando and Rosalind apart is impossible. They are mutually complementary, he a strong, sane-souled lover of good in its practical relations and objective facts, she impregnable in maiden purity, yet as full of fun and frolic as any sweet healthy-minded girl could ever be. Rosalind is of that stable-centred nature which loveth but once yet loves for ever. All her dainty coquettish ways, her subtly sweet alternate coyness and *abandon*, her witty challenges in disguise, to her lover, when he, poor fellow, was lamenting his absence from her, her sympathy and her arch whimsicality, her love of teasing, though accompanied by a desire to go only so far therein as she may with credit to herself retire, to quote Celia's words, at the cost of a pure blush, proves that she is at once a very woman, yet one of the rarest of her bewitching sex. Orlando is as intrinsically great as he is naturally good, for he has had training neither in social accomplishments nor in moral principles. By temperament and inclination he is true, pure, noble, and brave, yet let him but come into Rosalind's presence, and his speech seems to fail him, a strong testimony to the magnitude of that affection which a lofty but lonely nature conceives towards the personality of its first love. While doing all she can, as Ganymede, to fan the flame of love in Orlando's heart, Rosalind takes care not to surrender too cheaply, lest the prize of her affection be not sufficiently valued.

Of Orlando and Rosalind, Moberly says: "Orlando has been ill-treated in every way by his tyrannical elder brother, but his good qualities come out only

the more by this perpetual bruising. He never loses the elasticity of mind and generosity of impulse which are to carry him through all. Rosalind is his exact counterpart, shaped for his love by similarity of destiny. She has spirit enough for her own affairs and for half a dozen plots beside, and tact enough to make them all run prosperously up to the time when the fourfold wedding comes to settle all. Her skill in repartee is as great as Beatrice's, but there is none of the malice which has to be got rid of in *Much Ado* by such a course of rigorous discipline. Rosalind never stings without strong and good reason and in the interest of truth and right."

Helen Faucit (Lady Martin) thus describes the happiness of the pair: "No word escapes from Rosalind's lips as we watch her there [in the last scene after the entrance of Jaques de Boys], the woman in all her beauty and perfect grace, now calmly happy beside a father restored to 'a potent dukedom,' and a lover whom she knows to be wholly worthy to wield that dukedom when in due season she will endow him with it as her husband. Happiest of women! for who ever had such means of testing that love on which her own happiness depends?"

Hazlitt sums up the relations of the happy pair in these words: "Rosalind's character is made up of sportive gaiety and natural tenderness, her tongue runs the faster to conceal the pressure at her heart. She talks herself out of breath, only to get deeper in love;" while Gervinus throws out the following pregnant hints: "Orlando enters into Rosalind's sport [that he should woo her as Ganymede under the pseudonym of Rosalind] rather passively than actively. He discovered the resemblance between the two: he regards her at first as the brother of his beloved one; he is at ease and pleased when near her. Then Oliver comes on the scene, and tells the story of Orlando's hurt. Immediately she faints away.

Oliver sees through her. 'You a man?' he says. 'You lack a man's heart!' Then she betrays herself further by expecting him to believe that her swoon was counterfeited. He believes her not. The conviction strikes him: he leaves her, jestingly calling her 'Rosalind.' We must assume that Oliver imparted his discovery to Orlando, and it is Orlando's turn to carry on the sport that he may not spoil her pleasure."

Despite the vivacity and charming mirth of *As You Like It*, across the deep azure of its horizon, begin to loom, now and again, the warnings of coming clouds. In this play there are intimations to be traced of the moral Gehenna into which Shakespeare was to be plunged in his next period, and from which he was to win his way back to an unclouded horizon at life's eventide, when the star of a triumphant faith gleamed over all. The clouds in *As You Like It* are premonitory of the coming storm!

SECTION 12.—TWELFTH NIGHT. 1600

The third of the three great comedies in Shakespeare's Second Period is *Twelfth Night*, and it is well worthy to take its place by the other two for sunny charm and bewitching light-heartedness. Gervinus says of it that "it is the purest and merriest comedy which Shakespeare has written;" while Hazlitt's criticism is: "This is one of the most delightful of Shakespeare's comedies. It is full of sweetness and pleasantry; it is perhaps too good-natured for comedy; it has little satire and no spleen; it aims at the ludicrous rather than the ridiculous; it makes us laugh at the follies of mankind, not despise them, and still less bear any ill-will towards them."

The date of composition is somewhat uncertain. That the play does not appear in Meres's list in *Palladis*

Tamia (1598) is by no means proof absolute that it was not then written. Fleay believed that it was first composed in 1593 or 1595, but was revised in 1601, and there is much to be said for the theory. At the same time, internal evidence leads to another conclusion. Feste's song, "O, mistress mine, where are you roaming?" was contained in Morley's *Consort Lessons* (1599), which proves either that *Twelfth Night* was composed before that date, or that the song was an old one, introduced into the play.[1] The latter alternative is the view taken by Dyce. Again, Sir Toby Belch sings a song, "Farewell, dear heart." This, however, was a ballad which appeared in Jones's *Book of Ayres* (1601). Jones, as Halliwell-Phillipps says, did not profess to be the author of the words used in his *Book*, and probably took them from Shakespeare's popular and successful play of the time.[2] Forde's *Parismus*, Part I. (1598), seems at least to have been read by Shakespeare, where Olivia is the Queen of Thessaly, and Violetta the disguised lady. Then, in Act III. Sc. ii. l. 79, Shakespeare makes Maria speak of Malvolio "smiling his face into more lines than is in the new map with the Augmentation of the Indies." Now the map in question was issued in 1599. Moreover, the reference in II. v. 180, "I will not give my part of this sport for a pension of thousands to be paid from the Sophy," refers, in all likelihood, to the return of Sir Robert Shirley from his embassy to the Shah of Persia, wherein he had acquitted himself with eminent ability and success. Taking everything into account, therefore, we shall be sufficiently near the mark, if we say that the play was written early in 1600, because it must have been some time on the boards prior to 2nd February 1601-(2), on which date John Manningham, who was a member of the Middle Temple, placed the

[1] *Cf.* Chappell, *Popular Music of the Olden Time*, vol. i. p. 209.
[2] Halliwell-Phillipps, *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare*, p. 264.

following entry in his *Diary*, still preserved in the British Museum [1]—

"Feb. 2, 1601-(2). At our feast, we had a play called *Twelve Night, or What You Will.* Much like the *Comedy of Errors,* or *Menechmi* in Plautus; but most like and near to that in Italian called *Inganni.*"

Twelfth Night was not published until it appeared in the Folio of 1623, where it occupies pp. 255-275 in the section devoted to "Comedies." The text of the Folio, however, has evidently been carefully revised, as it is wonderfully free from errors of the press.

The title of the play (taken from one of the scenes in *Gl' Ingannati*—"la Notte di Beffana"—the night of Epiphany—Twelfth Night) would suggest that the piece was specially designed for production at that time, when sports and revels were the order of the day, viz., the "Twelfth day after Christmas," otherwise 6th January: while the second part of the title would imply that whatever other title the reader liked to suggest would be quite as applicable.[2]

The metrical characteristics of the play support the external evidence as to date. The length of the play is 2684 lines. Out of these, 1741 are in prose, 763 in blank verse, with 120 lines of pentameter rhyme, as against 71 in *As You Like It,* and 40 in *Much Ado.* Of rhyme in the play the total percentage is 13.7, an increase upon *As You Like It* of 7.3 per cent. and *Much Ado about Nothing* of 8.2 per cent. This fact does not indicate any decided reversion to his early manner on the part of Shakespeare. It merely reveals the exquisite taste wherewith he adapted the medium of language to the intrinsic *motif* of a character, for be it noted, Viola speaks largely in verse, not in prose,

[1] MS. Harleian 5353; also cf. *The Diary of John Manningham,* edited by John Bruce (Camden Society, 1869).

[2] Some have thought that by the use of the name Shakespeare meant to signify that he was taking a long farewell of comedy. *Cf.* Charles Knight's edition and Sir Philip Perrin's *Hard Knots in Shakespeare.*

while the play is more distinctly lyrical in mood than either of its congeners. As regards feminine or double endings, we have a total of 152, or about 25.6 per cent., with three light endings and one weak ending. Coming next to "end-stopped" as against "enjambed" or "run-on" lines, we have a percentage of 14.7 of the latter, as against 17.1 per cent. in *As You Like It*, and 19.3 per cent. in *Much Ado*. This decrease is simply due to the increased number of rhyming lines in the drama, and of the old custom of rounding off a speech or a scene by a rhyming couplet.

With reference to "speech-endings" and the test based on them, we notice a great advance here, the percentage being 36.3, as against 21.6 for *As You Like It*, and 20.7 for *Much Ado*. The evidence drawn from the absence of puns and conceits, of wire-drawn wit and excessive wealth of imagery, is all on the side of substantiating the date given by the external historical facts. The chronological place of *Twelfth Night*, therefore, is demonstrated by all indications of probability to be at the end of Shakespeare's Second Period, when the sunshine of his life was about to be clouded by that mysterious term of depression, which, though it was to give us the greatest series of plays the world has ever seen, was nevertheless to overshadow his existence with a gloom, that left its mark on his life to his dying day.

The sources whence Shakespeare drew the materials for this exquisite drama—one that is suffused with all the golden glow of that Indian summer of happiness and peace which preceded the winter of his depression and discontent—are manifold. The main thread of the plot was undoubtedly derived from the Italian play *Gl' Ingannati* (The Deceived) (Venice, 1537), the author of which is unknown. In the poetical induction, *Il Sacrificio*, the name Malevolti occurs, which Shakespeare probably altered to Malvolio. The story then passed through Bandello's *Novelle* (II. 36)

into Belleforest's *Histoires Tragiques* (vol. iv. hist. vii.), a translation of which in Barnabe Rich's *Farewell to the Militarie Profession* (1581)—in which it appears as "The History of Apollonius and Silla"[1]—was undoubtedly read by Shakespeare. There were two other Italian plays bearing the name *Gl' Inganni* (The Cheats) which he must have seen, because he borrows the name Cesario—that of the disguised lady—from the play in question. A portion of Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* (1599) must also have been read, where a woman, disguised as a page, is faithful unto death to her master and lover. These are the chief sources whence the materials of the play were drawn.

The time-analysis of the drama gives a duration of three days wherein the action of it takes place, with an interval also of three days between the first and second days. The following is the detailed scheme—

Day I. embracing Act I. Sc. i.-iii. Interval of three days.
II. ,, ,, I. ,, iv.-v. II. i.-iii.
III. ,, ,, II. III., IV., V. There are indications, however, of a different scheme occupying three months (V. i. 97-101). *Cf.* Daniel, *Transactions New Shakespeare Society*, 1877-9.

The plot may be detailed in a few words. The chief thread concerns the love felt by Duke Orsino, the ruler of a fair city in Illyria, for Olivia, the mistress of large lands and much wealth. To do him justice, her wealth forms the least part of her attraction in his eyes. Olivia, however, cannot love him. She has given her heart to one whom she believes to be a man, but who is, like herself, a woman. Orsino cannot bring himself to plead his suit in person. He insists, either by reason of nervousness or from laziness, on wooing by deputy—never a satisfactory course, and here less so than usual. The inevitable result ensues. When he does decide to woo in person, the lady is already contracted.

[1] *Cf.* Furness's *Variorum Shakespeare* ("Twelfth Night"), also Hazlitt's *Shakespeare Library*, part i. vol. i.

The second thread of the plot traces the fortunes of Sebastian and Viola, the brother and sister who, like the Antipholi and the Dromios, were so absolutely alike in looks as to seem each the double of the other. They influence the fate of Olivia and Orsino in a remarkable degree. Olivia, while in daily intercourse with Viola, who is dressed in male attire, is all the time under the belief that it is Sebastian with whom she is conversing. All the tangles, however, are gradually unravelled, the puzzles satisfactorily solved, and Sebastian claims his Olivia, while to Duke Orsino falls the rich prize of the hand and heart of Viola. Still another thread in the plot of the drama is the scheme devised by Olivia's barnacle of an uncle, Sir Toby Belch, who, by the way, has established himself in his niece's household as one of the family, disorganising its staid order and ceremonial by his revel and debauch. His plan was to promote a match between his niece and his boon companion, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, that a home might thus be secured for life for him, when his friend and his niece were made one. Needless to say it failed!

The last thread is the plot to make fun of the inordinate vanity and self-sufficiency of Malvolio, the steward, a bigoted precisian with a strong leaning towards Puritanism. Sir Toby, Maria, Olivia's maid, Sir Andrew, and Fabian concoct a scheme to lead Malvolio to fancy that his mistress, Olivia, is in love with him. Malvolio falls into the snare, is fooled up to the top of his bent, is finally incarcerated in a madhouse, whence he is released, a sadder and an angrier, but it is to be feared by no means a wiser man!

Such, then, briefly sketched, are the various threads of the plot of this great comedy. Now as regards the characters. Orsino, Duke of Illyria, who professes to be so deeply in love with Olivia, is in reality not in love at all, as yet. He is only enamoured of the idea of being in love. Its romantic possibilities and bitter-

sweet alternations of sorrow and of joy appeal to his sensuously poetic nature. Only when Olivia is lost to him for ever, and when the companionship of Viola (disguised as Cesario) seems likely also to be withdrawn from him, when, moreover, he whom he believed to be a man stood revealed a maid—then and then only does he seem to find in Viola the fruition of all his aspirations and hopes. We regret that Viola's noble nature is not to be mated with a soul of more responsive fibre and less self-centred ideas. Delicately strung though the spirit of the Duke may be, it is stronger in capacity for feeling than in faculty for doing. Viola's imperial nature will have to supply much, if her husband is not to fall far short of her ideal. On this character Gervinus says: "The Duke's mind, wholly filled with his love for Olivia, seems stirred by deep sentiments of the most sacred tenderness and truth. Sunk in melancholy, he avoids all noisy society; the chase and every other employment is a burden to him: 'unstaid and skittish' in everything, he seems prompted by the desire to compensate for this variability by the firm constancy of his love. To nurture this love with the most delicate and strongest aliments is his sole business: he courts, therefore, the solitude of nature and surrounds himself with music." Kenny also adds: "The passion of the Duke for Olivia is neither very deep nor very dramatic. It is merely dreamy, restless longing, and enthralling desire. It is the offspring of a mood which we cannot help thinking was specially familiar to the poet himself; it seems directly akin to the state of feeling which he has revealed in his 'Sonnets.'"

Next glance at Sebastian and Viola, the obverse and the reverse of the same coin. What a strange mingling of brilliancy and of bitterness is in their nature. The world has dealt hardly with Sebastian. Left alone at an early age, he has had to fight his way up the ladder of success, now happy, now miserable. One quality,

however, is perennially present in his nature, his marvellous power of attracting affection from all and sundry, a power only to be accounted for by his essential sweetness of disposition. Side by side with this sweetness, however, is to be traced a determination not to allow this amiable quality to involve him in difficulties. Yet his heart influences his power of action more swiftly than his head, and he is hurried into difficult situations against his better judgment. That his twin spirit, Viola, should possess somewhat of the same characteristic is only to be expected. As it is this element in Viola, masquerading as Cesario, which first attracted Olivia, its presence in Sebastian confirms her belief that the two, Cesario and Sebastian, are one and the same. Sebastian wisely decides silently to profit by the advantage his sister, as Cesario, had been able to win. His character, though limned in lighter outlines, filled in too with less multiplicity of detail, and painted in more subdued colours than Viola's, is wonderfully beautiful, and is kept throughout consistently true to the original conception.

Now what of Viola? Here is the analysis furnished by Winter, which seems to me more profound and searching than aught I could furnish: " Viola is Shakespeare's ideal of the patient idolatry and devoted, silent self-sacrifice of perfect love. She makes no attempt to win, spreads no lure, resorts to no subterfuge. In such cases the advance is usually made by woman. It is so made by Rosalind, for example, a character commonly but erroneously named as the perfection of abstract poetical spirituality and refinement. It is not made by Viola. She loves and she is simply herself, and she will submit without a murmur to any sorrow that may await her. Rosalind is a woman, Viola is a poem; Rosalind is human, Viola is human too, but she is also celestial. Disguised as a boy she will follow the fortunes of her lord, and she will even plead his cause, as a lover, with the beautiful

woman who has captured his physical longing and languishing sentimental fancy. A woman under such circumstances commonly hates her rival with the bitterness of death. Viola never harbours hate, nor speaks one word of antagonism or malice." To this Mrs. Jameson adds: "Viola is perhaps in a degree less elevated and refined than Perdita, but with a touch of sentiment more profound and heart-stirring: she is deep-learned in the lore of love. Compare Rosalind and Viola. The wild sweetness, the frolic humour which sports free and unblamed amid the shades of Arden would ill become Viola, whose playfulness is assumed as part of her disguise as a Court-page, and is guarded by the strictest delicacy. She has not like Rosalind a saucy enjoyment in her own incognito; her disguise does not sit so easily on her; her heart does not beat so freely beneath it." To sum up the character, the distinguishing trait of her nature is the deep, silent patience and unselfishness of her love for the Duke. From their first interview, when as a page she waited on him, she had lost her heart to him. Though it seemed the crucifixion of her love to do it, she nevertheless pleaded her master's cause with Olivia, and that cause lost nothing by her advocacy. Olivia, the great lady, whose will had been law to all around her for so long, actually stoops her pride to solicit Cesario's (otherwise Viola disguised as Cesario) love, and the refusal she receives stings her affection into that blind madness of passion from which Sebastian was to win the prize. The confusion of lovers and the medley of emotions that results, remind us of the fast and furious fun of the *Comedy of Errors*, though in *Twelfth Night* there is a tragic note, not far apart from tears, running through all the scenes where Viola (Cesario) is mistaken for Sebastian and Sebastian for Viola (Cesario). Viola treats Olivia much as Rosalind in *As You Like It* treated the rustic maid Phœbe, only with greater tenderness and reverence.

Next, what of Olivia? She is the great lady, proud of her rank and family, flattered by the Duke's preference, and the result is conceivable that in the end, had Viola (Cesario) and Sebastian not crossed her path, she might have married Duke Orsino, and spent a happy enough life with him, though neither would have risen to the highest possibilities of their being. Gervinus says: "Olivia looks coldly on the Duke's suit because she realises he is only in love with his rank as yet. He has never bestirred himself to prove the truth of his words by personal effort. . . . She therefore calls his love heresy, and turns coldly away from him. She finds no desert in him unless it be that of higher rank, and it is this very superiority in the Duke that she disdains." Gervinus sketches her character as "a lady of free and serious mind; not of a humour to bear the jests of a messenger, but thoroughly capable of thoughtfully receiving the significant thrusts of her fool: not sufficiently masculine to dismiss with more than words the dissolute relatives who beset her house, but carefully considerate of maintaining by her puritanical steward and of ruling over her house in a prudent and sober manner. On her seal she bears the chaste Lucrece: she holds Malvolio in honour for the sake of his virtuous zeal; 'my mouse of virtue' is the caressing term which the fool confers on her, while by various traits she sustains the severely moral character which these qualities indicate."

After Olivia comes Maria, her maid, an amazingly life-like portrait of the pert, saucy, clever, ready-tongued confidential attendant, whose intimacy with her lady begets a familiarity that seeks to make every one an equal. Maria never would have dared to carry out the trick on Malvolio, had she not so worked on Sir Toby's amorous inclinations, that he married her as the price for writing the letter which was intended to mislead Malvolio. Long residence with her lady had enabled the maid to acquire the surface veneer of

good breeding—at least sufficient of it, to deceive the drunken Sir Toby into marrying her, come the awakening whensoever it might thereafter!

Sir Toby was a big, burly, jovial, gross-minded country squire, fond of rural sports and hard drinking, with a coarse vein of rough and ready humour, not far removed from bullying, which made him popular with boon companions of like kidney to himself. To secure for the remaining term of his natural life the continued means of eating and drinking is the sole aim of his existence. He marries Maria because he believes she is indispensable to his niece, and that he will find accordingly a place kept for him at fireside and table as long as he lives. Sir Andrew Aguecheek, his humble admirer, is a fine study in mental fatuity. Slender of the *Merry Wives*, with "the little wee face, with the little yellow beard, the Cain-coloured beard, who holds up his head and struts in his gait," is his first cousin, and they are on a par for incipient imbecility. Of the pair, Arthur Symons well says: "Sir Toby's wit bubbles up from no fountain of wisdom; it is shallow, radically bibulous, a brain-fume blown from a mere ferment of wits. His effect is truly and purely comic, but it is rather from the way in which the playwright points and places him than from his own comic genius: in this how unlike Falstaff, who appears to owe nothing to circumstances, but to escape from and dominate his creator. Sir Toby is the immortal type of the average 'funny fellow' or boon companion of the clubs and public-houses, and you may meet him any day on the street with his portly build, red, plump cheeks, and merry eyes twinkling at the incessant joke of life. His wit is facile, contagious, continual. . . . Sir Andrew is the grindstone on which Sir Toby sharpens his wit. He is an instance of a natural fool becoming truly comic by the subtle handling in which he is not allowed to awaken too

keenly, pity or contempt. He is a harmless simpleton, an innocent and unobtrusive bore."

Of Feste the Fool, Gervinus well says: "No other of Shakespeare's fools is so conscious of his superiority as this one. He says it, indeed, too often, and he shows still oftener that his foolish wisdom is in fact no folly, that it is a mistake to call him a fool, that the cowl does not make the monk, that his brain is not so motley as his dress. It is in this play that the instructive passage occurs which designates the fool's difficult office as demanding that he should 'observe their mood on whom he jests, the quality of the persons and the time, and check at every feather that comes before his eye'—and this is exactly the part Shakespeare has made Feste the Fool here play." Then Ulrici remarks: "The contrast most carefully worked out in this play is between Feste, the Fool by profession, and the involuntary fools, Malvolio, Sir Andrew, and Sir Toby. While the latter in their own conceit and foolishness unconsciously draw the cap and bells over their own ears, the former in his self-adopted mental garb of motley colours, moves with inimitable adroitness, and pins the lappets of his wit to the back of all the other characters. The meaning of the poem is, so to speak, centred in him. He alone in full consciousness contemplates life as a merry 'Twelfth Night.' . . . He does not wish to be more nor less than a fool in the great mad-house of the world." In a word, Feste is one of Shakespeare's subtlest creations. Realistic alike in conception and execution, the character stands out clearly limned, an impressive portrait, not merely of the professional "fun-maker" of all great Elizabethan households, but as an incarnation of the inherent sadness that lay below the surface gleam and glitter of sixteenth-century jollity. The humour of Feste has no bright and blithesome quality in it like that of Launce and Speed, or of the Dromios, or of Costard, or of Launcelot Gobbo, or of Bully

Bottom, of the Clown in *All's Well that Ends Well*, of Dogberry and Verges, of Touchstone, or of the Clown-gravediggers in *Hamlet*, of Autolycus, or of the Shepherd's clownish son in the *Winter's Tale*. Rather does it resemble the bitter-sweet wisdom of Omar Khayyam, while the burden of his message is like that of the official who of old followed the pomp-loving potentates of the East, and, after the heralds had proclaimed the titles and the greatness of the ruler, was enjoined to add, "And yet this mighty monarch must die—must die!" This note of overpowering pathos, in view of the mystery of life and death, is also struck in the lyrics which Feste sings, "O, mistress mine, where are you roaming?" "Come away, come away, Death;" "When that I was and a little tiny boy."

Finally we have the ill-used Malvolio, supposed by some critics to be a portrait of some contemporary Puritan. For believing so, however, there is no very strong warrant. Rather is the character to be esteemed a picture of those strait-laced fanatics or sectaries who were not the true Puritans, but saw harm in all innocent sports and amusements, and thought, as Sir Toby said, "that because they were virtuous there should be no more cakes and ale." If, however, the character be a portrait of some contemporary Puritan, the conception and execution of it both reveal what an infinitely abler limner of current personages Shakespeare was than Ben Jonson. The "Zeal-o'-the-Land-Busy" of the latter, designed professedly as a satire on the Puritans, is an utter caricature of all human attributes. Malvolio, while we smile at his follies, is still a man worthy of respect. The jest upon the luckless steward is amusing up to a certain point, but it loses its quality of fun when it crosses the border line of inflicting pain, both mental and physical, on the unfortunate sufferer. Of the character Charles Lamb says: "Malvolio is not essen-

tially ludicrous. He becomes comic but by accident. He is cold, austere, repelling; but dignified, consistent, and for what appears, rather of an overstretched morality. Maria describes him as 'a sort of Puritan;' but his morality and manners are misplaced in Illyria. He is opposed to the proper levities of the piece, and falls in the unequal contest. Still his pride or his gravity (call it what you will) is inherent and native to the man, not mock or affected, which latter only are the fit objects to excite laughter. His quality is at best unlovely, but neither buffoon nor contemptible." Mr. Joseph Hunter says: "Under a show of humility Malvolio hides a proud and tyrannical heart: in what he says of Sir Toby he shows the petty tyranny which he will exercise when the golden opportunity shall arrive. He begrudges any little service to any one, even that belonging to the office which he holds. . . . He invariably takes the unkinder part, and shows at the same time he has pleasure in taking it."[1] Mr. William Archer remarks of the character: "No one who reads the play without a preconceived theory can find in Malvolio the smallest trace of the zealot. All that can by any stretch of language be called Puritanism in his conduct redounds entirely to his honour. . . . If I may hazard a theory, I should say that he is not a Puritan but a Philistine. The radical defect of his nature is a lack of that sense of humour which is the safety valve of all our little insanities, preventing even the most expansive egoism from altogether over-inflating us. He takes himself and the world too seriously."[2]

With *Twelfth Night* Shakespeare's great "Comedy Period" comes to a close, and, as Dr. Furnivall says, we gradually enter within the shadow of the clouds of the coming storm as we approach the Third Period. Only one drama remains of the Second Period, *Julius*

[1] Hunter, *New Illustrations of Shakespeare.*
[2] *Macmillan's Magazine*, 1884.

Cæsar, and it is distinctly a tragedy. To it we now devote our attention.

SECTION 13.—JULIUS CÆSAR. 1601

We have reached the last play of the Second Period, the tragedy of *Julius Cæsar*. As one of Shakespeare's most impressive plays, though not one of his greatest, it has ever been a favourite with the public either when played or perused.

The text of *Julius Cæsar* has come down to us in a singularly perfect state. From this fact some critics contend that it must have been printed from the author's original MS., when it appeared in the Folio of 1623, its first publication. No positive evidence exists, however, as to date of composition. We have, therefore to fall back on indirect testimony. The play is not mentioned in *Palladis Tamia*, and must accordingly have been issued after 7th September 1598. On the other hand, Weever's *Mirror of Martyrs, or the Life and Death of Sir John Oldcastle*,[1] contains certain lines wherein the references to Antony's funeral oration are too specific to be applicable to any other piece—

> "The many-headed multitude were drawn
> By Brutus' speech that Cæsar was ambitious;
> When eloquent Mark Antonie had shown
> His vertues, who but Brutus then was vicious?"

Now the point to be noted here is that, in Plutarch, the "orations" of Brutus and Antony, though mentioned, are not given. They are among the few instances in which Shakespeare departs from his authorities. The inference is unavoidable that *Julius Cæsar* was already a popular piece when Weever's work was written. On this evidence alone we might date the play 1599-1600. Professor Herford, however, whose opinion is always worthy of consideration,

[1] Published in 1601.

thinks that the lost play of *Cæsar's Fall*, on which in 1602, Webster, Middleton, Munday, and Drayton were at work for the rival (Henslowe's) company, would be a somewhat tardy counterblast to an old piece of 1599. Jonson also must be taken into account, and the appearance of the man of "little Latin" in the arena of Roman tragedy put him on his mettle, and there can be little doubt that his massive *Sejanus* (1603) conveyed an unavowed challenge. Gervinus also puts the argument concerning date aptly when he urges that, in Drayton's poem *Mortimeriados* (1596), which in 1603 appeared in its new form under the title *The Barons' War*, there is a stanza, in the third book of that edition, which resembles the concluding words of Antony, a stanza which does not occur in the first edition of the poem. "The whole impression is (continues Gervinus) that Drayton and not Shakespeare must be considered the plagiarist, because the passage is so entirely identical with the feeling of the piece that it could not have been borrowed by Shakespeare from another." We shall not be much in error if we date the drama 1600-1!

The metrical tests in large degree bear out the date accepted above. Of the total length of the play, 2440 lines, only 165 are in prose, with 2241 in blank verse, of a character manifesting little difference from that of his maturest period. Rhyme largely disappears, only thirty-four pentameter rhymes being found in the play, while the total percentage of rhyme, as an inherent element of the piece, only attains 1.2. As regards the feminine or double endings, these reveal a very marked decrease upon the percentage registered in *Twelfth Night*. In the latter play, as we saw, 25.6 per cent. was the number; in *Julius Cæsar* only 19.7 per cent. is attained; while as regards the light endings and the weak endings, there are ten examples of the former, and one doubtful instance of the latter, dependent on the manner in which a certain line is

read. Coming next to "end-stopped" and "run-on" or enjambed lines, we note a very slight decrease in the former, but a material increase in the latter. Of the enjambed lines we have a percentage of 19.3, as against 14.7 per cent. in *Twelfth Night*. Then as regards "speech-endings," that is the percentage of speeches whose ending is not coincident with the end of a line, as was almost invariably the case in the plays of the early or immature period, *Julius Cæsar* shows a decrease both as compared with *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It*, viz., 20.3 per cent. as against 36.3 per cent. for the former, and 21.6 per cent. for the latter. True, there is an almost entire absence of puns, conceits, and superficial wit, while doggerel verse has wholly disappeared. Notwithstanding these points, however, the testimony furnished by the metrical tests as supplying contributory evidence towards a settlement of the date of composition is not of a very decided character. The reason is that *Julius Cæsar* reveals a decided lyrical element which tends to reproduce the characteristics of the earlier period, though the general trend of the evidence goes to place this play in the same period as *Henry V*.

The sources to which Shakespeare owed his materials were mainly Sir Thomas North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives*. The story of the "Death of Cæsar" had been a popular one among the predecessors and older contemporaries of Shakespeare. A drama entitled *The Fall of Cæsar*, and dealing with the facts of the struggle between Pompey and Cæsar, was played at Whitehall as early as 1562; while another, but in Latin, and entitled *Cæsar Interfectus*, the work of a Dr. P. Eedes, was represented at Oxford in 1582. In his *School of Abuse*, moreover, Stephen Gosson indirectly refers to a *Cæsar and Pompey* having been popular in his day (1579), while there is still more definite mention made of the existence of plays on Julius Cæsar in Henslowe's *Diary* (1594), *Mirror of*

Policie (1598), and Heywood's *Apology for Actors* (1612), while Polonius undoubtedly refers to the great popularity of the subject when he says, "I did enact Julius Cæsar: I was killed i' the Capitol: Brutus killed me." As late as 1604, probably before any intelligence of Shakespeare's mighty achievement, save the vaguest rumours, had crossed the borders, Sir William Alexander, Earl of Stirling, produced his tragedy of *Julius Cæsar* at Edinburgh. Curious points of resemblance exist between the speeches of Brutus, Cæsar, and Mark Antony in the two dramas, but these must have resulted from the two writers borrowing from the same authority, viz., North's *Plutarch*, of which a new edition had appeared in 1595. Plutarch had been translated from Greek into French by Sir Thomas Amyot, and it was this form of the work which North translated in 1579 and revised in 1595. The later edition was the one employed by Shakespeare, as there are several expressions therein, absent from the edition of 1579, which appear in the play.

Though he followed Plutarch faithfully in most instances, there are some few divergences, and these occur in the most notable scenes in the drama, such as the great speeches of Brutus and Antony to the Roman citizens, the monologue of Brutus in the second act, and the magnificent quarrel-scene between Brutus and Cassius in Act IV., where the dramatist skilfully condenses into the limits of one interview the sayings and doings of two entire days. Another point of difference between the *Lives* and the play is that in the latter the assassination takes place in the Capitol and not in the Curia, as stated in the *Lives*. In the Senate House and not in the Capitol it was that Pompey's statue stood, erected in his honour, to commemorate his having beautified that part of Rome with a theatre and sundry fine porticoes.

The scene where the action of the play takes place is first at Rome (Acts I., II., III., IV. Sc. i.); then at

Sardis (Act IV. Sc. ii., iii.); finally at Philippi (Act V.). At the time of the fall of the Republic, Rome was a seething cauldron of political unrest. On the field of Pharsalia, Julius Cæsar shattered the last remnant of belief in the doctrine, dear to the minds of the Roman aristocrats from the days of Coriolanus, that an ægis of protection was cast by some tutelary divinity over the patrician order, safeguarding it from all possible attack by the plebs. Pompey was the last martyr to the cause of republican oligarchism, and a new *regime* was coming into existence. Despite all his unparalleled versatility and supreme political genius, Cæsar was in many respects only an opportunist of a very high order. He could be all things to all men to advance his own interests, and to the upholder of the ancient *régime*, such a policy must have been most repellent. The old doctrine, "Each one for the whole," by faithful adherence to which Rome had overcome all her rivals, was being deliberately superseded by Cæsar in favour of that other maxim, which is the essence of Cæsarism, "The whole for one." Little wonder that "the divine Julius" fell a victim! The wonder is he escaped so long. To men of the type of Brutus, the most drastic remedies were deemed essential to cure this State disease. Had the lives of half the Senate been demanded, the price would not have appeared too great, nor would these men have shrunk from paying it.

Shakespeare, therefore, with fine artistic instinct, strikes the first note of warning in the opening scene of the play, when Flavius and Marullus rebuke the rabble for their fickleness in forgetting Pompey for Cæsar, and every scene thereafter lays stronger stress on Republican detestation of Cæsar's absolutism. This is the teaching of the play, which Shakespeare certainly drew originally from Plutarch, but made it his own.

The historic period embraced by the action of the drama covers a space of about three years, viz., from October B.C. 45 (Cæsar's triumph) to October

B.C. 42, when the battle of Philippi was fought. The dramatic action represents the occurrences of six days with considerable intervals between them. The action is exceedingly swift in its evolution. The rapidity wherewith, after the murder of Cæsar, the day of reckoning is seen to be approaching, conveys the impression of some relentless Até, having constituted itself the Avenger of Cæsar, hurrying on the day of doom, by making the victims themselves its auxiliaries in accelerating their own destruction. The following is the table of the action—

ay	I. embracing	Act	I. Sc. i.-ii.; with Interval of a month following.
„	II. embracing	„	I. „ iii.
„	III. „	„	II. III.; followed by an indefinite Interval.
„	IV. „	„	V. Sc. i.; followed by an indefinite Interval.
„	V. embracing	„	IV. „ ii.-iii.; Interval of a day.
„	VI. „	„	V.

We come now to consider the construction of the plot. While the drama as a whole must be regarded as one of Shakespeare's greatest, outside the circle of the unapproachable quartette, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, and *Othello*, on the other hand, it manifests grave faults in technical skill, and, in point of rounded completeness of dramatic interest, cannot be held to compare with *Antony and Cleopatra*, or even with *Coriolanus*. The plot is simply the description of the conspiracy for the murder of Julius Cæsar by Brutus, Cassius, and the others of the Senatorial Republican party, and the avenging of his murder by Antony and Octavius. The catastrophe is self-evident from the time we are told, "Brutus and Cassius are rid like madmen through the gates of Rome" (III. ii. 273).

Though the plot, as a whole, cannot be unreservedly commended, the skill wherewith the dramatist has compressed several distinct threads of incident into one main strand (as in the quarrel-scene, IV. iii.) is worthy of the highest praise. Let the reader peruse

the scene in question, thereafter let him betake himself to Plutarch and read over what is said there of the interview, and the quarrel between the two friends, also of the interruption by Phaonius (the poet of the play); on to the second interview of the two generals on the following day, when Cassius reproaches Brutus for having condemned Lucius Pella; on finally to the reception of the news of the death of Portia, and he will obtain a better idea than can be given in any manual or text-book of the unerring artistic skill wherewith Shakespeare condensed all these separate incidents into the limits of one marvellous scene. The dramatist's art in dealing with great masses of detail and sifting the essential from the accessorial was never more triumphantly manifested than here.

Internally the drama is instinct with throbbing human interest from start to finish. Conscious though we are of faults in construction, and of anachronistic blemishes, such as Cæsar asking, "What is't o'clock?" or Casca meeting lions "against the Capitol," or Lucius describing the conspirators to Brutus as having "their hats plucked about their ears, and half their faces buried in their cloaks," and so forth, such as the scholarly Jonson would never have permitted to find a place in *Catiline* or *Sejanus* (or Bacon, could he ever have written the plays), yet, while we may yawn and skip passages in both the above plays of Jonson's, where is he who dares miss a line of *Julius Cæsar?* After this piece became popular, no other Elizabethan or Jacobean dramatist ever attempted to handle the theme.

When we come to analyse the characters of the play we are immediately confronted by a perplexing enigma with regard to the presentation of the title-character of the play. Julius Cæsar is nominally the hero of it, but he is depicted in such a way as to render him not only far from being the principal character, but even as in some measure the object of contempt. Yet

Shakespeare, both in the play itself and elsewhere in his dramas, has shown that he was fully cognisant of the splendid qualities, alike of nature and of intellect, wherewith the great Dictator was endowed. Cassius even admits his nobility when he grudgingly says:

> —" Why should Cæsar be a tyrant then?
> Poor man! I know he would not be a wolf,
> But that he sees the Romans are but sheep."

Brutus also says—

> —" to speak truth of Cæsar,
> I have not known when his affections swayed
> More than his reason."

In 3 *Henry VI.*, V. v. 53, the emphatic statement is made, " he *was* a man;" in *Richard III.*, III. i. 69, he is styled

> —" a famous man;
> With what his valour did enrich his wit,
> His wit set down to make his valour live;"

also in *Measure for Measure*, III. ii. 45; *Cymbeline*, II. iv. 20; III. i. 49; *Henry V.*, V. Chorus; *Antony and Cleopatra*, II. vi. 14, and other places, there is full manifestation made of Shakespeare's realisation of Cæsar's social, political, intellectual, and even moral greatness. Yet what are the facts? In the play before us, " the mightiest Julius," " the Colossus that did bestride the world " (I. ii. 135), is represented as a vain, thrasonical boaster, one who covets absolute power, but dreads to take the crown proffered by Antony, lest the acceptance of it would be *caviare* to the general (I. ii. 220-278). His speech has the imperious yet petulant ring of the would-be autocrat (III. i. 39), who is a monarch in all but name, yet shrinks from putting the effervescent enthusiasm of the rabble to the test by assuming the insignia of royalty. Shakespeare's aim was to portray Cæsar as spoiled by victory and over-intoxicated with success and excess of power. In his person he united honours and authority never before held by one

man in the history of Rome. Five times he had been Consul and four times Dictator, and now the proposal was being mooted to make him Dictator for life. To the tribunitian power he had also been advanced, which among other advantages rendered his person inviolable, so that any one attacking him committed high treason. In place of the Censorship, he had been endowed with a new office, called *Præfectus Morum*, new powers being added. His opinion as *Princeps Senatus* was always asked first in that august assemblage, while his effigy was struck on the coins. In addition he was declared exempt from the laws, and had semi-divine honours paid him. In such circumstances is there room for wonder that he should manifest signs that the ancient Republican simplicity and the Republican institutions, so dear to Brutus and the other conspirators, were no longer objects of regard to him? It is this weaker side of a great man which Shakespeare emphasises. With strokes of rare subtlety and real incisiveness, he reveals the prolonged process which made Julius Cæsar the absolutist of the play, viz., the almost servile worship offered to him by Antony (I. ii. 10), the perpetual flattery of the Senate (III. i. 33) and great men of Rome, the applause of the populace (I. ii. 244). Shakespeare, then, with a deft tragic touch he has never before manifested, shows us the deadly product of all those influences in the real not the ideal "Cæsar," the "thing" that is the victim of his own superstitious fears (II. ii. 5), swayed alternately by Calphurnia's entreaties not to go to the Senate that day, but to send a messenger stating he is sick, and then moved to go by his own desire to receive fresh honours. Thereafter he bursts out with the words—

> —"Shall Cæsar send a lie?
> Have I in conquest stretch'd my arm so far,
> To be afeard to tell greybeards the truth?
> Decius, go tell them, Cæsar will not come."

But again there is a change, when Decius asks that

some reason for the absence of Cæsar might be given him lest the Senate should laugh at him; also when he goes on to interpret Calphurnia's dreams in a more favourable light; hints, moreover, that his enemies might say he was afraid, and that the Senate had better break up till Cæsar's wife had better dreams; and insinuates that the Senate were perhaps anxious to offer him the crown again. He decides once more to go, and go he does—but to his death!

What was Shakespeare's object in representing Cæsar as so vacillating a character? Such explanations as the dramatist's deficient classical knowledge, his desire to promote sound constitutional principles, and his dislike of revolutionary ideas do not meet the case. The most probable explanation, which Shakespeare hints at also in *Coriolanus* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, is that he aimed at teaching the political doctrine that "Cæsarism," or autocracy tempered by intelligence—an absolutism or personal despotism, in fact, such as Cæsar and our Tudor sovereigns manifested in their rule—was more beneficial to the mass of mankind, than a Republicanism which by its nature was impersonal—caring more for the enunciation of principles than the bettering of persons. The lesson had to be taught that "Cæsarism" was independent of individuals, that "the man Julius" might have many faults, and might be destroyed by the daggers of the conspirators, but that "the spirit of Cæsar" or "Cæsarism" was imperishable, and was sufficiently potent to overwhelm in utter ruin the very men who dreamed they destroyed the principle when they slew the person in whom it was temporarily incarnate. The silent, impalpable, indestructible force of Cæsarism was omnipotent, because its human instruments were mere accessories that came and passed, to be known no more. That was the teaching of Cæsar's character!

Of Shakespeare's portrait of Cæsar, Hazlitt remarks: "The play is remarkable for the profound knowledge

of character, in which Shakespeare could hardly fail. If there is any exception to this remark it is in the hero of the piece himself. We do not much admire the representation here given of Julius Cæsar, nor do we think it answers to the portrait given of him in his *Commentaries*. He makes several vapouring and rather pedantic speeches and does nothing. Indeed, he has nothing to do." Dowden says more definitely: "Julius Cæsar appears in only three scenes of the play. Where he does appear the poet seems anxious to insist upon the weakness rather than the strength of Cæsar. . . . Julius Cæsar is indeed the protagonist of the tragedy; but it is not the Cæsar whose bodily presence is weak, whose mind is declining in strength and sure-footed energy, the Cæsar who stands exposed to all the accidents of fortune. The bodily presence of Cæsar is but of secondary importance, and may be supplied when it actually passes away, by Octavius as its substitute. It is the spirit of Cæsar which is the dominant power of the tragedy." Gervinus also states: "It was necessary to keep Cæsar in the background and to present that view of him which gave a reason for the conspiracy. According even to Plutarch . . . Cæsar's character altered much for the worse shortly before his death, and Shakespeare has represented him according to this suggestion."

Brutus and Cassius ought properly to be considered together. Dowden well says: "The life of Brutus, as the lives of such men must be, was a good life in spite of its disastrous fortunes. He had found no man who was not true to him; and he had known Portia. The idealist was predestined to failure in this positive world. But for him the true failure would have been disloyalty to his ideals. Of such failure he suffered none. Octavius and Mark Antony remained victors at Philippi. Yet the purest wreath of victory rests on the forehead of the defeated conspirator. . . . Brutus is the political Girondin; he is placed in contrast with

his brother-in-law, Cassius, the political Jacobin. Brutus is an idealist; he lives among books; he nourishes himself with philosophies; moral ideas and principles are more to him than concrete realities. He is studious of self-perfection. Cassius, on the contrary, is by no means studious of moral perfection. He is frankly envious and hates Cæsar. Yet he is not ignoble. Brutus loves him, and the love of Brutus is a patent that establishes a man's nobility."

On this contrasted pair Gervinus says: "Cassius is the natural originator of the conspiracy, and in all its plans and in all their councils he shows himself a greater master of the art of managing men than Brutus. Even in gaining over the members he betrays that knowledge of human nature which Cæsar praised in him. He lures the noble Brutus with the common weal and the call of family honour. The difference, therefore, between his nature and that of Brutus comes out on every occasion. Brutus is just as humanly noble as Cassius is politically superior."

They are widely different, yet they are alike. The one is the foil to the other, and to be accurately understood they must be considered together. Brutus is one of the noblest as it is one of the most natural of our great dramatist's portraits of historic personages. The *vraisemblance* is absolute. From a few scattered hints in Plutarch, the genius of Shakespeare has evolved a personality at once simple in its love of truth, high-souled honour, and straightforward dealing in all matters, yet highly complex in the manifold emotions which affect it, in the variety of the motives which prompt it towards action along certain well-defined lines, and in the philosophic principles it has adopted as its rule of life. A man of blameless political and social character, Brutus lives for learning and personal culture. His existence flows on tranquilly and peacefully, its tenor broken only by such events as the election of friends to fill the offices of State. At

such a time, these friends realise the value of his support, as large numbers of people are proud to follow the lead of one who "sits high in all the people's hearts." Herein lies the danger of such a leader. Brutus is a student, not a statesman; a philosopher, not a politician. He is therefore incapable of diagnosing either what is the best remedy for the social *malaise*, or of discerning the true proportions of Cæsar's revolution. He resembles Hamlet, in that he is a scholar suddenly hurried from his books and placed in the forefront of a great enterprise, demanding consummate qualities of leadership. The Republican cause was doomed when he joined it, but Brutus accelerated the fall.

Cassius, on the other hand, was a born leader, a man of action as opposed to a man of thought. Had he been accepted as leader and his advice followed, the conspiracy might have terminated differently. For plotters to be troubled with qualms of conscience is tantamount to putting a knife to the throat of their enterprise. Cassius advised that the slaughter of Antony should synchronise with that of Cæsar (II. i. 156), next that he should not be allowed to pronounce the funeral oration over the dead Dictator (III. i. 232). In both matters he was over-ruled by the humane Brutus; but both were prime tactical blunders. The portrait of Cassius, though not so complex in conception, nor so psychologically minute as the other, is clear-cut and definite. He advocated a theory of Republican liberty which, though agreeing with that of Brutus in essentials, was better adapted to meet the practical needs of the time, because based on a study of their causes. Like Cæsar, he is a wary Opportunist, and the two men instinctively hated each other, because each stood for what, politically speaking, the other disliked.

Antony and Octavius are the only other male characters deserving notice. There is absolutely no like-

ness between the somewhat faint and hazy outlines of Antony's earlier years, which appear in Plutarch, and the brilliant character, instinct with life, colour, and genius, that occupies so prominent a place in the pages of Shakespeare's work. The hints in Plutarch's three *Lives* (Cæsar, Brutus, Antony) as to Antony's great military capacity—for Julius Cæsar gave him the command of the left wing at Pharsalia, while he himself commanded the right—as to his affability to and influence over the soldiers, as to his moderation and clemency at junctures, where extravagance and cruelty would scarcely have been reprehended, were all noted and worked up as subordinate details, in the composition of a character, which stands out as the most complex and interesting in the play. This is not the place to note the differences between the Antony of *Julius Cæsar* and him of *Antony and Cleopatra*. Suffice to say that in many outstanding traits and qualities they are absolutely distinct men.

Gervinus takes a low view of Antony when he says: "How low does this man sink when contrasted with Brutus's unselfishness, patriotism, mild forbearance, and saving of blood. And yet (he is compelled to add) we must confess that even this wretch, on the score of humanity, recommends himself to us beside the corpse of Cæsar, more than even the noble Brutus. Like Brutus he was the friend of Cæsar; to him also Cæsar had been just and faithful; his death touches him truly and sincerely; he testifies to this when he is alone, and when he is with the servant of Octavius; he ventures even to show his sorrow to the murderers; his heart is truly 'in the coffin there, with Cæsar,' and only to this real and undissembled sorrow the great effect of his artful speech is due."

The portrait which Shakespeare draws of Octavius is that of a cool, calculating, scheming diplomatist, who sees the end of a scheme from the beginning, and will not move a finger until he does so. He is absolutely

pitiless, gratitude has no place in his constitution, but he is intellect personified—a man who, in everything, looks to the main chance and how a specific action or line of policy is going to benefit himself. He is jealous of Antony's influence and of his ascendancy over the legionaries. Already he is plotting how he may most expeditiously, yet most conveniently, clear away from his path this soldier of fortune. The portrait of Octavius here is but the preparatory study for the great portrait of the future master of the Roman world in *Antony and Cleopatra*.

Portia and Calphurnia, or more properly Calpurnia, are also designed as foils to one another, the high-souled devotion and rigorous self-restraint, the far-seeing sagacity and cool resourcefulness of the former, who gloried in being Cato's daughter and Brutus's wife (II. i. 295), and daily sought to render herself more worthy of the honour, contrasting vividly with the querulous over-fondness and hysterical agitation, the foolish superstition and inconvenient pertinacity of the latter. Calphurnia is a woman whose presence would have been no strength to her husband, for her emotions dominated both her judgment and her will (II. ii. 8-110); Portia, on the other hand, had such complete control over all her faculties, and so utilised them to assist her husband, that pain itself and the maladies of the body, were forgotten in the high resolve of proving a worthy auxiliary to him. The other characters in the play are more or less lay figures, without distinctive individuality.

Thus ends Shakespeare's Second Period. There is so little distinction between the technical characteristics of *Julius Cæsar* and those of *Hamlet*, that, unless for the purposes of division, they might stand in the same category. In metrical characteristics, however, there are important differences which will be indicated in their place.

CHAPTER VIII

SHAKESPEARE'S LIFE FROM 1602 TO 1609

WE come now to glance at the facts of Shakespeare's life during the years covered by his Third or Great Period, viz., that of his "Matured Art," when his genius had reached the zenith of its power, when his art revealed itself as having attained the utmost limit of its development—a development which, whether viewed from an intellectual or an imaginative point of view, has been the most marvellous of any writer in the entire history of the literature of the world.

Shakespeare's Third Period lasted from 1602 until 1609, or, in other words, from the era of *Hamlet* to that of *Coriolanus*—the most fruitful epoch of the dramatist's busy life. During that period of about eight years, he continued to reside with the Mountjoys, the family of Huguenot refugees at the corner of Silver Street and Monkwell Street. He was surrounded beyond doubt by friends and associates each of whom would gladly accord to him that tribute of honour and respect due to his exalted genius. Receiving, as he certainly would, from every rank in society at all interested in letters, that homage to which his position as the acknowledged head of the English dramatic poetry of the epoch fully entitled him, one might well suppose that Shakespeare, notwithstanding minor difficulties and disappointments, would still be regarded as a happy man. Yet the opposite is the case. From 1602, when that mysterious "eclipse of spirits" fell upon him, which is present in all his work after *Julius Cæsar*, onward until 1609, he appears, as it were, to have lived out of the sunshine of individual happiness, and under a heavy cloud of mental depression.

Hallam, in his *Literature of Europe*, writes of this mysterious period of gloom: "There seems to have been a period in Shakespeare's life when his heart was ill at ease and ill content with the world or his own conscience; the memory of hours misspent, the pang of affection misplaced or unrequited, the experience of man's worser nature which intercourse with unworthy associates by choice or circumstance peculiarly teaches; —these, as they sank down into the depths of his great mind, seem not only to have inspired into it the conception of *Lear* and *Timon*, but that of one primary character, the 'censurer of mankind.' This type is first seen in the philosophic melancholy of Jaques, gazing with an undiminished serenity and with a gaiety of fancy though not of manners on the follies of the world. It assumes a graver cast in the exiled Duke of the same play, and next, one rather more severe in the Duke of *Measure for Measure*. In all these, however, it is merely contemplative philosophy. In *Hamlet* this is mingled with the impulses of a perturbed heart, under the pressure of extraordinary circumstances. It shines no longer as in the former characters, with a steady light, but plays in fitful coruscations, under feigned gaiety and extravagance. In *Lear* it is the sudden flash of inspiration across the incongruous imagery of madness; in *Timon* it is obscured by the exaggerations of misanthropy. These plays all belong to nearly the same period: *As You Like It* being usually referred to 1600, *Hamlet* in its altered form to 1602, *Timon* to the same year, *Measure for Measure* to 1603, and *Lear* to 1604."

In the above extract Hallam has put his finger on the crux of the problem. It was the congeries of anxieties and troubles outward, united to the burden of inward self-accusation and to the torture of a condemning conscience, that constituted the momentous difficulty of this crisis.

To explain this gloom and the altered tone in his

dramas, many reasons other than those adduced by Hallam have been assigned. One section of biographers sees in his mental state the evidence of political danger accruing to him for his chivalrous championship of his friend and benefactor, the Earl of Southampton, now caught in the toils of the conspiracy of the Earl of Essex. Others allege overwhelming financial disaster threatening his affairs; a third section contends that only now did he realise the pressing insistence and profound significance of those problems of life, responsibility for sin, the origin of evil, the incidence of retribution upon the innocent as well as the guilty, the conflicting doctrines of Free-Will and Necessity, the reconciliation of the providence of God with the cruelty of nature, and so forth; while a fourth class would assign to profound sorrow over his betrayal by a friend he loved, this mysterious phase in his mind and art.

While one is unable to agree wholly with any of those theories, yet each one seems to contain a germ of valuable truth. Shakespeare unquestionably suffered deeply over the imprisonment for life of his friend, Southampton, but that of itself would not overshadow his soul so profoundly. The effect here would be infinitely beyond the possibility of the cause to produce. We must therefore examine elsewhere for some other contributory cause.

No further need we look for an explanation of the mental depression which affected Shakespeare from 1602 to 1609, than (1) the changed political conditions which prevailed in England before and after James of Scotland came to the English throne. To Shakespeare the change was like passing from the glory of mid-noon into the gloom of midnight. With all her faults—and her warmest panegyrist will not deny them to have been both manifold and mischievous—she was a monarch to whom the greatness of England was more than dear. James Stuart, on the other hand, was

both a man and a monarch whose instincts were base and whose aims were selfish. Addicted to secret vices of a degrading character, viewing every question only as it would affect his personal interests or his personal popularity, with no lofty outlook on men, manners, or things, with, moreover, no majestic mien wherewith to impress those whose minds were open to spectacular influence or to the power of objective forces, James, by his very appearance and speech, conveyed the idea that he was something of a charlatan, and not a little of the mouthing moralist, to whom precept and practice were wide as the poles asunder. Kind though James was to Shakespeare, the latter was too true a patriot not to look beyond the personal benefit to the national bane.

That a monarch such as James was to follow Elizabeth, as by this time was strongly probable, doubtless gave Shakespeare the deepest apprehension and concern. He bitterly realised that both the glory of England's romantic chivalry and the grandeur of her historic traditions and associations would inevitably be dimmed and finally disappear when entrusted to the kingly keeping of one, the extent of whose ambition seemed bounded by the desire to check "Tobacco-smoking" by "Counterblasts," whose merits were in inverse proportion to their length.

No wonder, therefore, that Shakespeare, with a nature so keenly susceptible to the greatness of the past, should regard the future with dismay, when the destinies of the country were to be entrusted to a man with so little sense of the magnitude of the interests involved. Each year, as it rolled by, deepened his apprehensions, as he saw the prestige of the country dimmed, and the tone of the Court—which of course set the tone to the people—growing ever lower and more debased. The hideous troubling of the springs of justice, in the treatment of Raleigh at the outset of the reign, the social pollution brought to light in con-

nection with the Overbury and Carr incidents, with the cynical contempt shown by James for truth and honour, must have shown Shakespeare that dark days were looming over England. In the successive themes, therefore, of his four great tragedies, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *Lear*, we note, in his portrayal of moral turpitude, an ever-deepening realisation of the abyss of sin into which men sink, when such ethical restraints are withdrawn, as are contained in the social respect shown for the requirements of the Decalogue. It was the pollution of the English Court under James that drove the truth home to Shakespeare, that England under him was a dying nation, and was doomed unless something intervened.

So much, therefore, for the exoteric or outward causes of Shakespeare's mental depression. Side by side with these, however, were others, which I may style the esoteric or inward causes of his gloom. Ill at ease as he was over England's dangerous political status, he was at this time called on to endure private trials of a peculiarly crushing kind, in the deception practised upon him by one who was his nearest and dearest friend. Who that was is uncertain, but probably it was Southampton. The deception had been practised some time before; the discovery was only made now.

From these generalities let us come to specific facts. In the year 1601 (February) Essex's ill-starred insurrection had taken place, which resulted in his own execution and in Lord Southampton's imprisonment. That these circumstances pressed heavily on Shakespeare is revealed with touching pathos in the "Sonnets," which I maintain are autobiographic throughout. His love for Southampton was something deeper and holier than the mere regard of beneficiary for benefactor. To the poet, his patron was no mere conventional personage to whom "sugared sonnets," bristling with the extravagant terms of

admiration and regard countenanced by the time, would be acceptable. Southampton, since the years when Shakespeare tendered to him the dedication of his two poems, *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*, had developed into one of the most remarkable men of the age, interested in every branch of culture, and himself no mean master in many of them.

Tom Nash, Barnabe Barnes, Gervase Markham, John Florio, George Chapman, and others all paid court to this brilliant nobleman. To none, however, save to Shakespeare, did he extend the favour of his intimacy. While a mere lad, he had perceived the majestic genius of his friend, and, to enjoy his society, had gladly sunk the peer in the man. With Shakespeare his intercourse, as we learn from the "Sonnets," was constant and close. Each found in the other an abiding satisfaction and strength.

The "Sonnets," in my belief at least, are the monument raised to this generous friendship, and they record genuine facts in Shakespeare's life. While the majority of these poems were, in all likelihood, written about 1594-5, others must have been produced during the period we are now considering. Careful study of the "Sonnets" has also convinced me that, about the same epoch, Shakespeare revised the whole series of "the Sugared Sonnets" circulating amongst his friends, imparting to them that faint but final autobiographic touch which is so inherent an element in them. The mystery, of course, remains, and possibly will remain to all time, how Thomas Thorpe managed to get his hands upon them. The latter had a connection with several of the French refugees resident in London. If only some link of acquaintanceship could be discovered between Thorpe and Mountjoy or Bellott, a possible channel of association would then be established between Shakespeare and the publisher of the "Sonnets." At present, however, nothing of the kind can be detected. Over the means whereby

Thorpe became possessed of this priceless literary property impenetrable darkness prevails.

In addition to the state of Britain under James; in addition, also, to the imprisonment of Southampton, there was another cause which touched Shakespeare nearly, because it showed that his friend Southampton had not the same steel-true fidelity manifested by Shakespeare towards the other. Among the ladies who adorned the Court in Elizabeth's day, and were celebrated by the poets and wits of the epoch, was Mrs. Mary Fitton, youngest daughter of Sir Edward Fitton. While not beautiful, she seems to have been exceedingly attractive, and many of the gallants of the time were in love with her. Among others, the young Earl of Pembroke, ere he succeeded to the title in 1601, and when he was still Mr. William Herbert, had relations so intimate with her that a child was born in February of the same year. He refused to marry her, the alleged ground being her "lack of honesty." She was eventually married, first to Captain Polwhele, and second to Captain Lougher. Her character was none of the best, for in addition to the child by Herbert, she was the mother of illegitimate twins by Sir Richard Leveson.[1]

Yet this was the woman whose spells seem to have brought the immortal Shakespeare to her feet.[2] When we come to consider the "Sonnets," we shall look into this question more at length. Suffice it now to say that after having led Shakespeare to understand that she was faithful to him, she (*teste* the "Sonnets") in the absence of the poet had thrown her spells over his friend, who had surrendered thereto.[3] A very strong case has been made out in favour of the Earl of Pembroke being "the young friend" of the "Sonnets"

[1] *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, by the Rev. G. Macauley; *Blackwood's Magazine*, 1885, 1886, 1887.

[2] Cf. *Shakespeare*, by W. C. Hazlitt.

[3] Cf. *Life of Shakespeare*, by S. Lee, pp. 113-164.

by Mr. Thomas Tyler.[1] Although the arguments he adduces are very cogent, they are scarcely strong enough to be convincing, and the question still remains in doubt as to the identity of "the friend" of the "Sonnets." Personally, I incline to the Southampton theory, but with a full consciousness of the strong arguments against it.

The depression which seems to have overshadowed Shakespeare's life at the epoch in question may also have been deepened by the mysterious scandal which, some time during the years 1601-9, gathered round Shakespeare's name. What it was, we have now no means of knowing, save that it was both a slander and a scandal, though in Sonnet cxxi. he seems to admit that the allegations were, in a measure at least, true. At any rate, be the cause what it might, Shakespeare's life during these years, was more or less overshadowed by this scandal, and all these matters weighing upon him, cumulatively induced that spirit of depression which exercised such a saddening effect upon him, though it also gave us his immortal sequence of great tragedies.

Meantime Shakespeare, outwardly, was quietly pursuing the accustomed tenor of his life, winning high reputation for himself both as a player and a playwright. While he was thus showing himself the hard-working actor-dramatist, the first premonitory signs of a storm which, ere long, was to burst over England and end in the closing of the London theatres some forty years later, were revealing themselves. I refer to the fanatical attempts on the part of the Puritans to suppress the drama in London. In June 1600, they had succeeded in inducing the Privy Council to issue an order to the Corporation of London and to the justices of peace in Middlesex and Sussex, forbidding more than two playhouses, one "The Fortune" in

[1] *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, by Thomas Tyler, M.A., with Appendix on the Herbert-Fitton theory.

Cripplegate, and the other "The Globe" on the Bankside. Fortunately, this order, which would have reduced many actors to beggary, was rendered null and void, by the failure of the local municipal authorities to take any notice of the injunction. Had they done so, Shakespeare's occupation would have been gone.[1]

Scarcely was this danger tided over when another came into view, in the dispute between the adult and the boy actors. In the year 1597, some lads from among the choristers at the Chapel Royal, had, as a novelty, been performing at the Blackfriars Theatre certain dramas of John Lyly and other popular playwrights. The dramas they essayed were mostly of the character of masques and romantic and fairy spectacles. So warm, however, was the favour wherewith they were received, that when, in 1600, the quarrel between the rival dramatists, Jonson on the one side and Dekker and Marston on the other, threw the entire dramatic world into two camps, it was the "Children" who again benefited. In *Hamlet* (II. ii. 349-364) Shakespeare referred to "the aery of children, little eyases," who dominated the theatrical world.

For a time, backed by Jonson, they carried all before them. *Cynthia's Revels* and *The Poetaster* achieved great success. But at last the reaction came! Shakespeare's company produced Dekker and Marston's play, *Satiromastix, or the Untrussing of the Humorous Poet*, a venomous attack on Jonson, and the dispute gradually flickered out. Shakespeare himself, with that lofty air of detachment from mere trivial, temporary, or individual interests, which always characterised him, took little part in the warfare, though in the *Return from Parnassus* he is said to have given Ben

[1] In December 1601, the Lords of Council sent letters to the Lord Mayor of London expressing surprise that the order of the previous year had not been carried into effect.

Jonson a purge that made him "bewray his credit."[1] The identification of Shakespeare with Virgil in *The Poetaster* is so probable that it has been generally accepted as correct. In the play, as Mr. Sidney Lee says, Jonson applies terms to Shakespeare so closely resembling others recognised to be his, that little doubt can exist on the subject. The tragedy of *Hamlet*, brought out in 1602, decisively settled the dispute in favour of the elder actors.

Shakespeare that same year purchased for £320 one hundred and seven acres of land from William and John Combe of Stratford, the conveyance being made to the poet's brother Gilbert, "to the use of the within-named William Shakespeare." The latter, as the eldest son, had, on the death of John Shakespeare, his father, in September 1601, inherited the two Henley Street houses. In one of these his mother continued to reside until her death (9th September 1608), while the other was let to a tenant. Finally, a local resident named Walter Getley transferred to Shakespeare a cottage and garden situate in Chapel Lane, opposite the grounds of New Place.

In this year John Marston produced his play, *Antonio and Mellida*, while Middleton's play, *Blurt Master Constable*, was printed. John Davies (soon to be Sir John) issued his long philosophical poem, *Nosce Teipsum* (Know Thyself), written nearly ten years before, while Thomas Campion in this year published his *Art of English Poesy*.

In the succeeding year, 1603, the Lord Chamberlain's Company played before the Queen at Richmond on 2nd February, while on 7th February a licence was obtained by James Roberts for *Troilus and Cressida*. But the chief event of the year was the death on 24th March of Queen Elizabeth, in the seventieth year of her age and the forty-fifth of her reign. She was suc-

[1] Cf. *Return from Parnassus*, edited by the present writer (Temple Dramatists), where the whole matter is discussed.

ceeded by James VI. of Scotland. All the poets of the day wrote either elegies or odes on the departed or the coming monarch save Shakespeare, and Henry Chettle notes the omission in the lines—

> "Nor doth the silver-tongued Melicert
> Drop from his honied Muse one sable tear
> To mourn her death that graced his desert
> And to his lays opened her royal ear.
> Shepherd, remember our Elizabeth,
> And sing her rape done by that Tarquin, death."

On his arrival in London on 7th May, one of James's first acts was to order the pardon and release from the Tower of the Earl of Southampton, doubtless greatly to Shakespeare's joy. *Hamlet*, the most popular of all Shakespeare's plays, was published surreptitiously in its first Quarto: Ben Jonson's *Sejanus* was also printed, with Lord Stirling's *Darius*, and Florio's *Montaigne*.

The newly-arrived King also granted a licence to perform stage-plays "within their now usual house called the 'Globe' and anywhere else in the kingdom" to the Lord Chamberlain's Company, who were henceforward to be called "The King's Servants." James, in all likelihood, had met the members of the company, Shakespeare included, when they visited Scotland in 1601, and now they took rank as "Grooms of the King's Chamber," the entire nine of them—William Shakespeare, Laurence Fletcher, Richard Burbage, Augustine Phillips, John Heminge, Henry Condell, William Sly, Robert Armin, and Richard Cowley—appearing in their scarlet robes in the royal train, on the King's formal entrance into London, 15th March 1604.[1] Later in the year the plague broke out, the theatres closed their doors, and "the King's Players" went on tour. On 2nd December they appeared at Wilton, the beautiful estate of William Herbert, third Earl of Pembroke. After performing

[1] Cf. *English Dramatic Literature*, by Ward, vol. ii. p. 36.

there by royal command, they received £30 (*circa* £240) by way of reward. Still later in the month, they were ordered to appear at Whitehall and Hampton Court, and nine plays were performed at the Christmas and New Year's celebrations. Samuel Daniel was this month appointed Master of the Revels and Inspector of Plays; and John Davies of Hereford in his *Microcosmus* (1603) addressed "W. S. and R. B." (William Shakespeare and Richard Burbage) as—

> "Players, I love ye and your Qualitie,
> As ye are men that pass time not abused."

In 1604 the plague was still raging. As the theatres could not be opened, by the King's command £30 (£240) was given to the "King's Servants" to recompense them for their enforced idleness. Then in March, as we have seen, James formally entered London, and the players walked in his train. In the following month, as the Corporation seemed inclined to interdict the players in their art, the King himself sent a letter to the Mayor and aldermen, ordering them to allow the "King's Men," the "Queen's Men," and the "Prince's Men" to play at their usual houses, the "Globe," the "Fortune," and the "Curtain." In June of that year we find Shakespeare suing Philip Rogers for £1 15s. 10*d*. It is probable, moreover, that in June or July, *Love's Labour's Lost* was performed before the Court; also, that in the following November and December, the "King's Company" played before the King and Queen, *Othello* being performed on 1st November, and *Measure for Measure* on 26th December. This was the year when Madame Mountjoy, as Professor Wallace has discovered for us, laid the facts of her daughter Mary's attachment to Stephen Bellott before Shakespeare, and induced the kindly dramatist to intervene, so as to diffuse happiness over the life of the child of the refugee. Mary Mountjoy was married

to Stephen Bellott, as the parish register of St. Olave, Silver Street, records, on 19th November 1604.

In the year 1605, Shakespeare's "fellow and friend," Augustine Phillips, died, bequeathing in his will to the latter "a thirty shilling piece of gold." In this year also, Sir William D'Avenant, the dramatist and poet, was born, his father being landlord of the "Crown Inn," Oxford. Shakespeare stood as godfather, giving his name to the child. Skottowe relates the following story of Shakespeare's life at this time: "In his journeys between Stratford and London, the dramatist often stopped at the 'Crown Inn,' Oxford. Mine hostess was beautiful and witty, her husband a grave and discreet citizen of a melancholy disposition, but a lover of plays and playmakers, and especially of Shakespeare. When the child grew to be a boy of seven or eight years, he became so fond of Shakespeare that he could not be kept away from him. One day an old townsman, observing the boy running homeward almost out of breath, asked him whither he was posting in that heat and hurry. He replied, 'To see my Godfather Shakespeare.' 'There's a good boy,' said the other, wittily playing on the report that Shakespeare's relations with mine hostess were more familiar than friendly—'but have a care you don't take God's name in vain.'" In this year also Shakespeare bought the unexpired lease of a section of the Stratford tithes.

Among contemporary literary events, we must note that George Chapman's comedy of *All Fools* was printed, after having been performed at the Blackfriars Theatre; also *Eastward Hoe*, written by Chapman, Jonson, and Marston, all of whom narrowly escaped being imprisoned by King James for their satire on the Scots. Francis Bacon published his great work, *Of the Advancement of Learning*, and John Stow issued the fourth edition of his *Annals*, continued down to the 26th March of that year, only ten days before his

death. This year also Cervantes printed the first part of the inimitable *Don Quixote.*

In the year 1606 *Macbeth* was in all probability completed, while on 26th December *King Lear* was produced before the Court. Contemporary with these events in the life of Shakespeare were the following—that the Earl of Stirling issued his *Julius Cæsar,* as already stated (see *ante,* p. 309), George Chapman his comedy of *The Gentleman Usher,* and John Marston his of *The Fawn;* John Speed published his *Maps of Great Britain and Ireland,* while Chapman edited and issued Kit Marlowe's poem, *Hero and Leander;* Sir Edward Coke became Chief Justice of Common Pleas; while later in the year, Christian IV., King of Denmark, visited his brother-in-law, James of England, bringing with him Inigo Jones, the architect, who was easily persuaded to remain in England.

In 1607 (5th June) Susanna, Shakespeare's elder daughter, was married to Dr. John Hall, who later became celebrated as a physician and surgeon. He practised in Stratford, and seems to have been Shakespeare's own medical attendant. He had strong Puritanical leanings, wherewith he infected his wife, so that after her father's death, Susanna and her husband took a very pronounced stand against all association with the theatre. This may account for the disappearance of any books and MSS. belonging to Shakespeare.

In this year, moreover, *The Puritan, or the Widow of Watling Street,* was printed,[1] in which occurs a direct reference to *Macbeth,* which had been produced the previous year, viz., " Instead of a jester we'll have a ghost in a white sheet sit at the upper end of the table." In December of this year Shakespeare's youngest brother, Edmund (born in 1580), died in Southwark, and was buried on the 31st of the same

[1] One of the plays ascribed to Shakespeare. *See* chapter on " Shakespearian Apocrypha."

month in the Church of St. Mary Overies, where also are buried Gower, Fletcher, and Massinger, the obsequies being marked "by a forenoone knell of the great bell." William Barksted also issued *Mirrha, the Mother of Adonis, or Lustes Prodigies*, in which the following reference to Shakespeare occurs—

> "But stay, my Muse, in thine own confines keep,
> And wage not war with so dear loved a neighbour,
> But having sung thy day song, rest and sleep;
> Preserve thy small fame and his greater favour,
> His song was worthy merit—Shakespeare, he
> Sung the fair blossom, thou, the withered tree;
> Laurel was due to him; his art and wit
> Hath purchased it; cypress thy brow will fit."

In 1608 (21st February) Shakespeare's granddaughter, the eldest child of Dr. Hall and Susanna Shakespeare or Hall, was baptised, the name of Elizabeth being given her. It is matter for note that the conventional custom of naming the first daughter after the maternal grandmother (Anne Hathaway) was not followed here. On 20th May, *Antony and Cleopatra* was entered on the Stationers' Register by Edward Blount, while in September, Shakespeare was once more called upon to suffer trial in the death of his mother, who was buried at Stratford on the 9th of the month. On 16th October Shakespeare seems again to have been in Stratford, as he stood godfather to William, son of Henry Walker, alderman of the borough.

This was the birth year (9th December) of John Milton, the only English singer who approaches the solitary throne of Shakespeare; also of Edward Hyde, Lord Clarendon, of Thomas Fuller, author of *The Worthies of England*, and of Sir John Suckling, cavalier poet.

In 1609 *Troilus and Cressida* was licensed, and soon after was published, with a title page stating that the piece had never been "staled with the stage nor clapper-clawed by the palms of the vulgar." On

20th May the licence for the printing of *Shakespeare's Sonnets* was granted to Thomas Thorpe the publisher, and the volume was issued early in June. The play of *Pericles* was also published, nominally written by Shakespeare, but in reality by Shakespeare and George Wilkins. *Coriolanus* was also written during this year, but was not printed until its appearance in the Folio of 1623.

Shakespeare's Third Period, or "Period of Maturity," not only saw his genius at its zenith of power, but it saw him in consequence of that very fact driven, by the sheer propulsive force of imperious intellectual necessity, to grapple with the highest and the deepest themes, of life, death, and futurity, analysing the mysteries of being, the origin of evil, and the law of human atonement for sin—all these, and other profound problems as well, were faced by him, during that soul-searing epoch of mental and moral self-examination and appraisal.

Again and again he seemed to totter, under the terrific strain of this intellectual self-warfare, on the very brink of the abyss of moral cowardice. Had he not forced himself to go on from *Hamlet* to *Othello*, from *Othello* to *Macbeth*, from *Macbeth* to *King Lear*, and to drag the truth of personal conviction and of belief in moral goodness out from the very jaws of the hell of unbelief, we might have had the glory of the great comedies to grace our lives with their assurance of the reality of artistic beauty and imaginative power, but we should never have had the ethical grandeur of the mighty tragedies, with their rich argosies of moral and spiritual teaching, won for us in the Gethsemane of supreme soul conflict.

CHAPTER IX

SHAKESPEARE'S THIRD PERIOD—THE PERIOD OF MATURITY

SECTION I

WE come now to analyse Shakespeare's Third and Greatest Period, which, as we have seen, lasted from 1602 to 1609. In the Second Period we noted the fondness Shakespeare showed for the character of Jaques as embodying a phase of his own marvellously Protean nature. So in *Hamlet*, in *Othello*, in *Macbeth* (though not so evidently in *King Lear*) we find him drawing upon his own spiritual experiences when portraying certain aspects of human idiosyncrasy and emotion; how an excess of the reasoning faculty paralyses the will-power as in Hamlet; what the Gehenna-fires of jealousy can induce a man to believe against his better judgment, and believing, to do, as in the case of Othello; and how the evil of inordinate ambition can hurry a man into inexplicable sin, as in the case of Macbeth. He was the myriad-minded man, the many-sided man, but he was also what Plutarch describes as the πολυπαθής—subject to many passions. Keeping that in remembrance, we possess a key which unlocks many hidden secrets of Shakespeare's spiritual development.

Shakespeare's Third Period as a whole, as Mr. Fleay says, shows greater freedom in metre; verse and prose appear intermingled in the same scene; there are frequent examples occurring of trisyllabic feet; short lines are abundant; feminine or double endings are much more numerous; regular Alexandrines, *i.e.*,

those not composed of two lines of six syllables, appear, and rhyming lines become very much fewer. As the period advances these characteristics grow more marked.

SECTION 2.—HAMLET. 1602

If not the greatest of Shakespeare's plays in an imaginative sense, *Hamlet* is unquestionably the most wonderful, as well as the most popular of them. Not to any well-proportioned or interesting plot is this due, for of plot there is next to none, but simply to the marvellous analysis given of an ultra-introspective temperament, with that complete paralysis of the active powers which results therefrom.

The date of composition is, in all probability, 1602, but a rough draft of the play, possibly an acting version for the use of the players, must have been in existence about 1601. As a publication, the play has reached us in two forms: a corrupt or rudimentary one issued early in 1603, and styled the "First Quarto" (Q1); also in one which is at once fuller, and from an artistic point of view more symmetrically perfect, published in 1604 and termed the "Second Quarto" (Q2). The former of these was probably a surreptitious and pirated copy, printed from stenographic notes, supplemented by passages that had impressed the memory; the latter was the authorised edition, published when the players' objection to the issue of one of their acting *repertoire* had been overcome, by the appearance of the spurious and grossly incorrect First Quarto. The drama, it should be remembered, was never performed in its entirety even in Shakespeare's lifetime, nor was it ever printed in its full form while he lived. Our authorised text then of to-day is derived from Q2 and the Folio of 1623.

The first reference to the play occurs in the Register of the Stationers' Company, and runs as follows: "1602

—xxvi^to^ Julii—James Robertes—entered for his copie under the handes of Maister Pasfield and Maister Walterston Warden. A booke called The Revenge of Hamlett, Prince [of] Denmarke as yt was latelie acted by the Lord Chamberleyne his seruantes . . . vj."

Notwithstanding the above entry, the book was not published then, nor, as far as can be ascertained, until after the death of Elizabeth. That it was Shakespeare's tragedy there can be little doubt, since it was performed by the company to which he belonged. The object of Roberts in making the above entry, was to secure the book to himself, being, as Furness says, aware that other printers and booksellers would endeavour to anticipate him. That he was unable to obtain a *Hamlet* of such completeness and accuracy as would be creditable for him to issue, seems the cause of his failure to implement his intimation. Some inferior and less scrupulous printer appears to have secured the MS. of the play and to have issued it in a pirated edition. The book was not published in any form approaching completeness until after the opening of the new reign, when the company, playing under the name and protection of the Lord Chamberlain, had been taken under the direct patronage of James I.

The First Quarto (Q1, 1603) has the following title page: *The* | *Tragical Historie of* | *Hamlet* | *Prince of Denmark.* | *By William Shakespeare.* | *As it hath been diverse times acted by his Highnesse Servantes in the Cittie of London: as also in the two U* | *niversities of Cambridge and Oxford and elsewhere* | *At London printed for N. L. and John Trundell* | 1603.

Of this edition only two copies survive, and both are imperfect, one being in the library of the Duke of Devonshire, and the other in the British Museum.

The Second Quarto (Q2, 1604) adopts a different style. The title page runs as follows: *The* | *Tragicall Historie of* | *Hamlet Prince of Denmarke* | *By William*

Shakespeare. | *Newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much* | *againe as it was according to the true and perfect* | *Copie* | *At London* | *Printed by I. R. for N. L. and are to be sold at his* | *shoppe under Saint Dunston's Church in* | *Fleet Street* 1604.

From these items of information the following inferences may be drawn: (1) That the play must have been produced at some date anterior to July 1602, probably earlier in the same year, and (2) that it must have been written prior to this latter time, in all likelihood late in 1601 or early in 1602.

So much for external evidence bearing on the dates of composition and production; now the following facts of internal evidence must be noted: (1) That the particular "inhibition on the players" referred to in Act II. Sc. ii. l. 317, was the one resulting from their supposed connection with the abortive insurrection of the Earl of Essex, when they were induced by Sir Gilly Meyrick to place *Richard II.* on the boards. That, of course, occurred in 1601. (2) That the allusion to the "aery of children, little eyases" (Act II. ii. 354) was to the fact that Burbage had, at the end of September 1600, leased the Blackfriars Theatre to the boy-players, the choristers of the Chapel Royal, and that the pressure of their competition, owing to their temporary popularity, had been severely felt by the regular actors. These facts still further strengthen the view that 1602 is the date of composition and production.

But the point next arises, was the *Hamlet* staged in 1602 the work that has reached us to-day? The text as now existing is founded on an exhaustive revision of the Second Quarto (Q2, 1604) and of the First Folio (F1, 1623). The First Quarto (Q1, 1603) is so imperfect, reveals so many inexplicable omissions (especially in the great soliloquies), contains, moreover, so many gross errors in style and metre, also so many passages that are absolutely unintelligible, that the conclusion already stated, viz., that it was issued as a piratical

venture by a publisher who had engaged a stenographer to take down the play, seems the only likely solution of the problem.

The presumption, however, is strong that the printer, James Roberts, whose name stands on the intimation or advertisement in the Stationers' Register, is the same as the " I. R." of the Second Quarto (Q2) who printed the latter for N. L. (Nicholas Ling), his aim being, as has been said, to secure that no other publisher would enter the field. In such a case little care would be taken to preserve a pure text. The language of the First Quarto (Q1), however, is in many respects, so turgid and bombastic, and so devoid of sense and meaning in other places, that one can scarcely believe even a hired stenographer and a piratical publisher would dare to place such a commodity on the literary market. Of course, if such an object, as has been stated, underlay the issue, and only one or two copies were to be thrown off, the case would be comprehensible.

How otherwise can we explain the evolution of the marvellous drama of *Hamlet* from an original so rude and inchoate? Probably the indignation excited in the minds of Shakespeare and his friends over the outrage—for such it was—led to the issue of the Second Quarto (Q2), " newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much againe as it was." At the same time, there is strong probability that Shakespeare, when called on to revise the First Quarto, not only revised the acting edition of the play, but also prepared an independent text for press, containing those passages of which the exigencies of stage production necessitated the omission. From this MS. the First Folio (F1) text was printed, and, to my mind, this is the explanation of the differences to be found between the Second Quarto (Q2) and the First Folio. Some of the names of the characters undergo significant change in the process of revision, Polonius and Reynaldo replacing in the

Second Quarto the Corambis and Montano of the First, while the dapper Osric in the latter struts his brief stage-moment merely as "a Braggart Gentleman."

As regards the subject-matter of the play, and the sources whence it was drawn, the legend of *Hamlet* is one of great antiquity, dating back to the epoch of the Scandinavian sagas. Nearly one thousand years ago, the story, in all its main features, was familiar to the people of Iceland, from which place it was introduced into the Rhyming Chronicle of Denmark. Shakespeare, however, for the materials of his play, went to the fifth volume of Francis de Belleforest's *Histoires Tragiques* (1559-70), containing stories of the tragical fate of kings and heroes whom love or ambition had destroyed. Belleforest, in turn, had drawn on the *Historia Dannica* of Saxo Grammaticus,[1] one of the earliest Danish writers (1208). The latter himself had been indebted to the ancient Scandinavian lays, in particular to the *Skioldunga Saga*, the Icelandic saga of the Danish kings. Shakespeare could have had no access to any English translation of the *History of Hamleth* or Amleth, for although rendered into doggerel German by Hans Sachs in 1558, although translated, moreover, into French by Belleforest in the fifth volume of his *Histoires Tragiques* (1570), no English version existed until Thomas Pavier's translation appeared in 1608, when Shakespeare's drama had been both played and printed. That, however, made little difference. It was an age of MS. translations, and besides, the fact that he lived with a French family like the Mountjoys cannot be over-estimated, because, through them, he would be brought into contact with many French chroniclers and annalists, whose work he has utilised in his dramas.

Another consideration must, however, be kept in view, that there had been an old play, no longer extant, on the Hamlet story, probably by Thomas

[1] See *Icelandic Legends*, by Powell and Magnusson.

Kyd (1557-95), who had been a member of the Lord Chamberlain's Company and a friend of Shakespeare. After Kyd's death, his play continued to be performed from time to time, by the company. To this piece there are several contemporary references. One of the earliest is contained in an epistle "To the Gentlemen Students of both Universities," written by Nash and prefixed to Greene's *Menaphon* or *Arcadia* (1589), in which he said, "English Seneca read by candlelight yeelds manie good sentences as 'Bloud is a begger' and so foorth, and if you entreate him faire in a frostie morning he will affoord you whole *Hamlets*, I should say handfuls, of tragical speeches." (Greene's *Menaphon*, Grosart's edition.)

In addition to the above reference to the older *Hamlet*, others are to be found in Lodge's *Wit's Miserie*, in Dekker's *Satiromastix*, also in his *Westward Ho!* in Rowland's *Night Raven*, while in Henslowe's *Diary*, under date 9th June 1594, we have the following: "received at Hamlet . . . viij s." It belonged to that class of dramas known as "Tragedies of Revenge," of which Marlowe's *Tamburlane*, Kyd's *Jeronimo* and *Spanish Tragedy*, Cyril Tourneur's *Revenger's Tragedy*, and Shakespeare's reputed tragedy, *Titus Andronicus*, are examples.

Some years after Kyd's death, and when mayhap some other writer was contemplating a play on the subject, the idea may have occurred to Shakespeare to recast the whole of the Hamlet material in a new form. As an initial step he revised Kyd's early piece, in what became the Second Quarto (Q2), afterwards re-writing the whole play about 1602-3, in the form introduced into the Folio of 1623. The Quarto or revised acting text was completed and the play produced in 1602, though not printed until the following year. This is still another hypothesis.

Now the differences between Shakespeare's plot, as presented in the revised *Hamlet*, and the story of

Amleth as given in Saxo and Belleforest, though mainly concerned with minor details, are so marked, that they suggest the alternative conclusions, either that Shakespeare had exercised considerable freedom in the treatment of the facts, or that he had followed the plot of the older play very closely, which in its turn had diverged from the lines adopted by its originals. Suffice to say that in the narrative as told by Saxo Grammaticus and Belleforest, the name of Hamlet's father was Horvendile, his mother Gerutha (or Grytha), his uncle (who slays Horvendile) Fengon, while the counterparts of Horatio and Ophelia, though they assist Amleth to escape the snares laid for him, are unnamed. The hero, although he succeeds in killing his father's murderer, does not die then, but throwing off the pretence of madness, ascends the throne, marries two wives, and performs many exploits, until he in turn was betrayed by a faithless spouse, Hermtrude. To an old German play, *Der Bestrafte Brudermord* (The Punished Fratricide), the author of the older *Hamlet*, or perhaps Shakespeare himself, may have owed some hints, as the likeness between it and the Shakespearian *Hamlet* is too close to be accidental. The late Dr. Furnivall's criticism of the theories of those who sought to raise a lofty superstructure on this frail foundation is, to say the least, sane and wise: "The whole matter of the German play is too risky to found anything certain upon."

The "Hystorie of Hamblet" which Furness gives in vol. ii. of his *Hamlet* in the Variorum Shakespeare is an almost literal translation from the French of Belleforest, and is obviously of an older date than its imprint: "London; imprinted by Richard Bradocke for Thomas Pavier, and are to be sold at his shop in Corne-hill, neere the Royall Exchange—1608." I am strongly inclined to agree with Collier that the *Hystorie* was in existence as early as 1580, and that the earliest dramatic sketch of *Hamlet* was written not later than

1585. Only with the revision of this had Shakespeare to do, for it is absurd to argue that, as early as 1585, he was already constructing the framework of this, one of the greatest dramas the world has seen.

The scene of the play is at Elsinore or Helsingör, an old town on the east coast of the island of Zealand in Denmark, about twenty-five miles north of Copenhagen. There the whole action of the drama is supposed to take place. Until the "Sound dues"—duties exacted from all vessels passing through the Sound or narrow strait between Denmark and Sweden—were abolished in the nineteenth century, all vessels had to stop and pay duties. That fact, and this other, that from the most ancient days Helsingör was the customary place of crossing to Helsingborg on the Swedish coast, led to Kronberg Castle being built for purposes of defence. The present edifice is quadrangular in shape, is also one of the strongest fortresses on the North Sea, and one of the finest specimens extant of sixteenth-century architecture. Erected by Frederick II., father of Queen Anne, wife of James I., though subsequently strengthened and repaired, it has been little altered since its construction somewhere about 1575-85. In it was a "great chamber, hanged with tapistary of fresh-coloured silk without gold, wherein all the Danish kings are exprest," which may have suggested to Shakespeare the picture-scene (III. iv. 53-71)—

> "Look here, upon this picture, and on this;
> The counterfeit presentment of two brothers."

Probably Shakespeare had either visited Elsinore, or had obtained an excellent description of the castle and its surroundings from some one who had been there and knew the relative location of the various spots. In 1585 English players performed certain dramas of the time in the Kronborg at Helsingör. Other companies may have visited it subsequent to

the above date. If not, there is nothing improbable in one of the players, who had been there in 1585-6, still surviving and giving Shakespeare the information required.

Saxo states that the historic Hamlet died on the mainland and was buried there. Later accounts, however, relate that he was defeated and slain near Elsinore, possibly in a naval engagement; and behind the chateau of Marienlyst, amid beautiful gardens, lies "Hamlet's grave."

The time-analysis affords us no very certain results regarding the duration of the play's action. Shakespeare was purposely vague, and seemed to deprecate any attempt to bind him down to exactitude. The complete space of time supposed to elapse is from two to three months, but only portions of seven days are really represented.

Day I. from midnight until the next evening of a March day, embracing Act I. Sc. i.-iii.
,, II. from midnight until dawn of next day, embracing Act I. Sc. iv.-v.
An Interval of two months; the season will then be May.
,, III. The whole of Act II. Sc. i.-ii. is embraced in this.
,, IV. ,, ,, III. ,, i.-iv., and Act IV. i.-iii.
,, V. embracing ,, IV. ,, iv.
An Interval which cannot be exactly defined but cannot be less than a week.
Day VI. embracing Act IV. Sc. v.-vii.
,, VII. ,, ,, V. ,, i.-ii.

The flowers which in Act IV. Ophelia has gathered help us to decide the season. As Professor Hall Griffin says: "Rosemary and rue are evergreens, but the violets are withered, while fennel, columbines, daisies, and pansies are in bloom; the willow trees are in leaf, and Ophelia can make garlands of crowflowers, nettles, and long purples. This indicates the end of May or the beginning of June: no other time will all the flowers mentioned fit, but for that time they are exact." [1]

[1] *Cf.* Professor Hall Griffin's edition of *Hamlet*; Rev. H. N. Ellacombe, *The Seasons in Shakespeare's Plays*.

As to the plot, it may be detailed in a very few words. Horatio, the friend of Prince Hamlet, has been informed by two soldiers of the guard that the ghost of their late King had been seen on the ramparts at Elsinore. Horatio watches with them next night, sees the spirit, and immediately acquaints Hamlet of the occurrence. The latter, who is plunged in sorrow (1) over his father's (Hamlet's) death, (2) over his mother's disgracefully speedy marriage with his uncle, and (3) over the diverted succession of the crown to Claudius his uncle, in place of descending to himself, determines to have an interview with the ghost. He does so, when the elder Hamlet informs the younger that he had been murdered by his own brother, who had also seduced the Queen to prove untrue to her marriage vows. He lays the charge upon his son as a sacred duty to avenge him. No sooner has this command been laid on Hamlet than he becomes involved in a network of psychological difficulties. Was he justified in taking life, and if he were, how best could the deed be done? Was he absolutely certain that the ghost was his father and not some devil from the vasty deep bent on misleading him as regards the murder of his father; was he himself the proper man to exact vengeance, and was Claudius in a fit state to be sent so suddenly out of life? Would not the swift fate of the elder Hamlet as to being, as his spirit complained—

> —" at once despatch'd:
> Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,
> Unhousel'd, disappointed, unanel'd; "—

be then paralleled by that of his murderer? These and other considerations presented themselves to his mind, so that the power of action was lost in an æsthetic maze of contrary considerations, until two months have passed and nothing had been done. Polonius believes the Prince's peculiarities to result from disappointed love of Ophelia, and suggests an

interview between the lovers, at which the King shall be present, shall overhear, and be convinced. The interview takes place (III. i.), but has the opposite result to what Polonius imagined. Claudius sees there is something deeper than disappointed love working in Hamlet's mind, and determines that the Prince shall be banished, as a menace to himself and the peace of the realm. Hamlet, meantime, on the arrival of the players, resolves to test the report of the ghost as to whether Claudius was guilty of his brother's murder or not. He does so. His plan is triumphantly successful, and Claudius reveals his guilt by his agitation. Hamlet then finds his uncle alone and at prayer. He thereupon determines to slay him, but immediately his accursed ratiocinative intellect gets to work, and action is forgotten in over-refined subtleties of thought. Polonius, while endeavouring to overhear what passed at Hamlet's interview with his mother, is killed by the former; Hamlet thereupon is banished to Britain, bearing with him " letters of Bellerophon " to the King thereof. Whilst his companions slept, something prompted him to open the letters, and he discovers the treachery contemplated towards himself. He thereupon inserted the names of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern for immediate slaughter, instead of his own, and replaced the letter in the bag. That night a fight with pirates took place, Hamlet escaped from the Danish vessel, and returned to Denmark, while his travelling companions went on to their death. Just then Laertes returned from Wittenberg indignant at the manner in which his father's obsequies had been hurried over, and went to Claudius determined to make trouble. The latter told him the real facts, and incited him against Hamlet, who had just returned to Denmark from his eventful voyage. Ophelia, meantime, agonised between love and duty, for she seems to have really loved Hamlet, lost her reason and committed suicide in the brook. Thereupon Claudius

and Laertes plot to kill Hamlet with a poisoned foil, and failing that by a cup of wine that will also be poisoned. Laertes accordingly challenges him to a fencing bout. In the contest the weapons are changed, and though he has wounded Hamlet in the first bout, in the second Hamlet wounds him, and both are doomed men. The instant the latter learns what has happened, and who is the guilty instigator, he swoops to his revenge with a glad impulsiveness that puts ratiocination to flight. "Venom, to thy work," he cries, as he plunges the sword into the body of Claudius. The Queen had also drunk of the poisoned cup, and in her death agonies she too accuses the vile Claudius of her death. Hamlet begs his friend Horatio to live in order to do his memory justice, and with the enigmatic cry, "The rest is silence," passes behind the veil into the Unseen.

The characters are so numerous that to analyse them all would be impossible. The portrait of King Claudius is drawn with masterly precision. Though a hypocrite and a coward, though he conceals under a dignified mien a scheming nature ready to plan any villainy if only agents can be provided to carry it out,[1] he is not wholly bad, despite the terrible crime of fratricide that blackened his soul. He could bear himself with a certain amount of dignity and majesty in the affairs of life (I. ii.), and he has sufficient force of character to impress the magnetism of his will on the Queen of his brother. He could inspire fidelity and respect in his courtiers (II. ii.); he had no wish to slay Hamlet merely because he feared him as a rival who had designs on the throne (I. ii. 106-109); he had a genuine affection for his Queen, however guilty may have been the means whereby he secured her (IV. vii. 13), and his system of rule was at once popular and beneficial (IV. iii. 58). Only after the "play-scene," wherein he suddenly found

[1] Tieck, *Dramaturgische Blätter : Kritische Schriften*, iii. p. 248.

his villainy exposed, and exposed by the very man by whom it was most dangerous it should be known, did Claudius resolve on Hamlet's death. Shakespeare, therefore, delineates him, at the outset, as worthy of a certain degree of respect, but with matchless art portrayed the corroding effect on the King's moral stamina, of the fact that his guilt was not only suspected but known, and that the knowledge had been confirmed by his own agitation during the play-scene. Step by step he marches to his doom. Every mesh in the network of plots woven against Hamlet served only to entangle him in the toils of destruction more irretrievably, and even his Queen, her love turned to loathing ere she died, accused him of murder. When his hour came he died absolutely friendless, deserted by all whom his treachery had alienated.[1]

With him we must study his partner and Queen, Gertrude. In all the wide range of Shakespeare's minor characters there is not one whose portrait is painted in colours so dark and mournful. The ethical lesson taught by it is the evils consequent on moral irresoluteness. So long as she was untempted and protected by her love for Hamlet the elder, and his for her, Queen Gertrude was a pattern of all the negative virtues. No sooner, however, did she let drop the ægis of this reciprocal conjugal love, to listen to the glozing flatteries of Claudius, than her virtue, which had nothing positive in it, melted like snow before the noontide sun, and she fell. Gertrude, however, was not happy. Passion can never take the place of love. She only needed her son's stinging reproaches to reveal herself to herself, and straightway she repented and resolved upon amendment (III. iv. 89). No sooner, however, had she left the atmosphere of Hamlet's influence and entered that of Claudius, than the old mesmerism asserted its force, and she revealed to him all that had passed. Hers was a nature pliable

[1] Bradley, *Lectures on Shakespearian Tragedy*, lecture iv. p. 168.

as wax, but as time went on she gradually evinced more susceptibility to receive the impress of what was evil than what was good (III. iv. 160-170). Though she loved Hamlet and protected him so far, she seemed to love vice and Claudius more, and even seeks to guard and defend the vile King.

As to the individual guilt of the two, Strachey says: "After the murder of her first husband, the Queen must have known facts which might reasonably excite her suspicions, after the event, and perhaps, from her neither pressing for an explanation nor attempting a refutation of Hamlet's implied charge against her present husband, such suspicions may have passed through her mind. But nothing is more universal than that characteristic of the female mind which . . . enables them to receive impressions, and make observations, without bringing these before their minds in distinct consciousness."

Laertes and Horatio are two finely contrasted characters. The former is a flippant, garrulous man of fashion; tainted with vices that were regarded as polite accomplishments because the multitude affected them. He was ready to bring on a revolution in Denmark rather than forego the opportunity of revenge. The latter is one of the strong personages of the piece, a man immovably centred in moral nobility of character and love of truth. In the case of Laertes his sorrow and anger over his father's death seem to proceed rather from the fact of the hurried and curtailed funeral obsequies accorded to him than from his slaughter by the heir-apparent. As Dowden says of Laertes, "he is accomplished, chivalric, gallant," but the accomplishments are superficial, the chivalry somewhat theatrical, and the gallantry of a showy type. He has inherited his father's faculty for glibly mouthing the maxims of proverbial wisdom, as in the scene with his sister (I. iii. 1-53), but in his mouth many of the sentences sound as though Satan

were reproving sin. Note the contrast in Horatio, the one absolutely heroic character in the play, the friend who never fails in need, the comrade who, amid the wildest whirl and stress of conflict, never loses his self-possession, but even when hard pressed the most, redoubles his exertions to rise superior to the shock of circumstance. As Professor Hudson says: "In his make-up there is not a single loose stitch." Even to the bourne beyond the grave his friendship for Hamlet would have carried him, had the latter not appealed to him as in duty bound to remain in this harsh world awhile and unravel the tangled threads of his story. What a contrast to the blatant, mouthing Laertes is this grave, silent warrior, this man of action not of words, by whom the witness of friendship is given not in high-sounding declarations of fidelity, but in deeds that carry conviction in their train. Well does Ulrici say of him: "Alone of all the characters Horatio is without any ends of his own. He does not aim at making any profit of life for himself, but devotes himself entirely and unreservedly to his friend. And for this disinterested conduct he gains that which all the others lose. It is clear that Fortinbras, young and unacquainted with the circumstances of his new kingdom, will select Horatio—the friend of Hamlet, and named by the dying heir to the throne as his exculpator and the defender of his fair fame—for the high but responsible office of restoring peace and order to the racked and disjointed kingdom." [1]

We are apt to judge Polonius by the estimate of Hamlet, and to write him down a chattering old windbag, fond of political saws and trite ethical instances. And such indeed, in some measure at least, he was, and we regard the portrait as an ideal one of a garrulous, fussy, self-important Court official, with "words of wisdom" on his lips, but a conspicuous lack of the attribute in his head. We can fancy him an eager

[1] Ulrici, *Shakespeare's Dramatic Art*, bk. iv. chap. v.

laudator temporis acti, one full of wise maxims regarding the practice and State policy when he was young, one too who had studied closely the principles of conventional social morality, not that he might exemplify them in his own life, but that he might enjoin them on others. Some critics have asserted that Shakespeare borrowed his idea of Polonius from the character of "Lord Sycophant" in the old play of *Nobody and Somebody*.[1] There was, however, deep down in the nature of Polonius, and seldom brought to view, a strain of sympathetic affection and romance. Despite his shallow Opportunism and his invariable habit of estimating the value of any person and thing by the ratio of expediency and conventionality, viz., whether they conformed to the judgment and practice of the majority, he could both love and pity, and his desire was to help Hamlet to overstep the obstacles of rank and station, if he honestly and honourably loved his daughter Ophelia. Hamlet's irritable impatience towards senile prolixity, however, saw in him merely a garrulous gas-bag, but that was a mistaken reading of the old man's character. To my mind, Goethe is quite wrong when he refers to "Polonius's emptiness and insignificance, his exterior agreeableness and his essential tastelessness, his freedom and his sycophancy, his sincere roguery and his pretended truth."[2] Tieck's analysis is infinitely keener and more correct: "I see in Polonius a real statesman, discreet, polite, keen-sighted, ready at the Council-board: he had been valued by the deceased King, and is now indispensable to his successor."[3] He was a diplomatist, versed in chicanery doubtless, but no hypocrite, a man to whom the more tortuous will perhaps seem the better path, but not on that account an evil man. Gervinus sums him up in these terms: "We see him commit no

[1] *See* Simpson's *School of Shakespeare*, vol. i.
[2] *Wilhelm Meister* (Carlyle's translation), vol. i. p. 364.
[3] Tieck, *Dramaturgische Blätter: Kritische Schriften*, iii. p. 257.

special acts of knavery, but we see him in a service and employment by no means over-honourable; he has an unwearied predilection for crooked ways, for aside thrusts, and for eavesdropping, and at length he falls a sacrifice to them; he meddles with everything, and gains a scent of his son's doings and companionships even in Paris, not so careful for the virtue as for the outward behaviour of his children, neither of whom he trusts." [1]

Ophelia is the sole character in the play for whom we feel the sentiment of sympathetic pity. She is purity itself, and her death is the result of a distraught mind, unhinged by a forbidden love. To imagine, as Tieck and Boerne urge, that the key to the relation between Hamlet and Ophelia is to be found in the fact that she has yielded up honour and all to him, is to misunderstand the very " strength in weakness " of her nature.[2] Ophelia's nature, like that of Hogg's Kilmany, " was pure as pure could be." She would have sacrificed much for Hamlet, but not her honour, because to her such a sacrifice would have meant death eternal and irrevocable. She is so completely under her father's domination that, at his command, she will suffer any personal pain and inflict similar anguish upon Hamlet, under a mistaken sense of dutiful regard for the family name. In limning the character of Ophelia, Shakespeare may be said to have touched the high-water mark of his genius in female portraiture. Not that it is either his most fascinating or his most impressive female character. It cannot compare with that of Lady Macbeth in grandeur of outline, nor in profound pathos with that of Desdemona, nor in lofty moral earnestness with that of Isabella. In consequence of its intentional colourlessness, also by reason of her temperamental weakness and timidity, the portrait of Ophelia is one of the most complex and

[1] Gervinus, *Commentaries*—" Hamlet."
[2] Tieck, as before, p. 257 ff.

difficult to execute in the whole range of his dramatic gallery. The character had, so to speak, to be painted throughout in subdued tints and in half tones, these even requiring to be depicted as faintly as was compatible with differentiation of intellectual qualities. Every attribute of heart and head had to be more negative than positive, for if one mental feature were over-emphasised, it would alter the relation of the others, and exercise an over-shadowing influence upon Polonius and Laertes. Ophelia was intended to be a study of that conventional type of girlhood which thinks by precept and acts by rule, which lives in a world of society restrictions, and whose ethical code, whereby life is shaped, is to accept not what is absolutely right, but what society pronounces to be such. By a spirit such as this, Hamlet's affliction and the excesses into which it led him would be condemned, not condoned, because they were offences against society's canons. Ophelia had given Hamlet all the love whereof her heart was capable, but it was a love so thoroughly held in hand, that when Polonius and Laertes vetoed it, she had no thoughts of what her own rights in the matter were, but meekly acquiesced. Not alone was it the anguish of relinquishing Hamlet that turned poor Ophelia's brain, but the shock of her father's death and the circumstances under which it happened, with the feeling of unutterable loneliness which possessed her, as she realised that henceforward she had no one on whom to lean for support. Shakespeare, in drawing the character of Ophelia, has given us another proof how just were his ideas on psychological development. Given the qualities which he portrayed at the outset as present in Ophelia, such a train of troubles as met her, could only induce one result—madness.

On Ophelia, Hazlitt says: "She is a character almost too exquisitely touching to be dwelt upon. O rose of May, O flower too soon faded! Her love, her

madness, her death, are described with the truest touches of tenderness and pathos. It is a character which nobody but Shakespeare could have drawn in the way that he has done, and to the conception of which there is not the smallest approach, except in some of the old romantic ballads." Goethe also says: "Of Ophelia there cannot much be said, for a few master-strokes complete her character. Her whole being floats in sweet, ripe passion. Her inclination to the Prince to whose hand she may aspire, flows so spontaneously, the good heart obeying its impulses so unresistingly, that both father and brother are in fear, and warn her directly and harshly. Decorum, like the thin lawn on her bosom, cannot hide the movement of her heart."

Finally, as regards Hamlet, despite the fact that such distinguished specialists in brain-disease as Drs. Ray, Bucknill, Conolly, and Kellog unhesitatingly pronounce Hamlet to have been mad, citing as confirmatory facts his fondness for ridiculing, his cruelty towards Ophelia, his broken sleep and bad dreams, his melancholy, his desire for secrecy—all such being symptomatic of insanity—I cannot bring myself wholly to accept their verdict. Rather do I think that he was a man on whom was laid a task—considered by him as a duty, but for which he was both physically and morally unfitted. To those who are students of mental philosophy, the fact will be familiar that to one endowed with what is known as the "ratiocinative temperament," any sudden, impulsive, or unweighed course of action, such as was laid on Hamlet, is abhorrent. Natures, such as these, delight to consider the "whys" and the "wherefores" of every deed entrusted to them, from all possible view-points, not from any cowardly desire to shirk action, but simply owing to temperamental reasons. Hamlet's excessive ratiocination, as applied to introspective analysis, had never been checked. Inordinate intro-

spection in early life promotes constitutional melancholy. It ought, therefore, to be kindly but firmly discouraged. Hamlet, the older he grew, indulged the more persistently in the practice, until his will, or power of translating thought into action, had become permanently enfeebled.

From the moment of his interview with the spirit of his father, Hamlet appears the victim of two absolutely contrary impulses, one spurring him on to the avenging of his father's cowardly slaughter, the other everlastingly tempting him to expend his energy in those fruitless questions of moral casuistry, typified by the query, whether he were not blameworthy, because he felt not the emotion evinced by the "First Player," when portraying the anguish of Hecuba over the slaughter of Priam. He suffered in fact from a disease of the will, the symptoms of which were that his ratiocinative faculty was abnormally active, while his conative faculty was moribund. Speculative logic-chopping had taken the place of practical effort, and he had lost the power to "do," because he had forgotten that it is a brave man's part to "dare." His nature had become too absorbingly intellectual in its estimate of life, to the exclusion of its ethical and practical relations. He had in fact become little more than a mere thinking machine, through pondering "too precisely on the event" (IV. iv. 41). Only when he forgot the "idea" in the "deed" (to use the language of Hegel) did he rise to the height of his purpose and achieve in one supreme moment, almost fortuitously, that action of which for months he had been despairingly revolving the means of accomplishment (V. ii. 310).[1]

Hamlet's insanity, then, did not take the form of "positive aberration." If Shakespeare's genius was so assimilative of all knowledge as to lead Lord Chancellor Campbell to assert, regarding his knowledge of

[1] Bradley, *Lectures on Shakespearian Tragedy*, lecture iii. p. 114.

law, that he must have been trained as a lawyer, and others to affirm that he must have served as a sailor, a soldier, a gardener, from the knowledge he displays of navigation, military evolutions, and the flora of England, surely that marvellous intuitive faculty, united to a keen capacity for observation, and to the absolutely unparalleled memory he possessed, could have enabled Shakespeare, designedly, to invest his great creation with all the symptoms of insanity, while, at the same time, keeping the Prince on this side madness. To many, the stupendous genius displayed in portraying the semblance of insanity in so life-like a manner, while yet preserving the nature of Hamlet free from any taint of positive lunacy, would be, to some extent at least, discounted, were Hamlet regarded as actually insane. While it is a tribute to the *vraisemblance* of the mental phase that the matter should be in doubt, Shakespeare, I consider, has safeguarded himself against such an imputation, not only by making the Prince intimate his intention "to put an antic disposition on" and to bear himself strangely (I. v. 170-180), also, by his declaration to his mother that "it is not madness that I have uttered" (III. iv. 139), but by the uniformity wherewith Hamlet carried out his purpose along certain given lines. Madness could not have done so in a manner so systematic. Hamlet never once deviates from his determination!

Of course the argument might be urged against our theory, that no sane man would have insulted and tortured the woman he, at one time at least, had loved, in the way Hamlet treated Ophelia. Hamlet, however, was of that sensitive type of mind which makes emotion, not discretion, its tutor. To imagine that he did not instantly penetrate through the clumsy devices wherewith Claudius and Polonius sought to surprise his secret from him, would be an insult to his intelligence, while the fact that Ophelia lent herself so easily to the furtherance of these devices, without

secretly warning him, would certainly irritate him against her. In the original tale of Saxo Grammaticus, Hamlet's foster-sister (who is Ophelia's prototype) contrives to warn him of the plots against him. The real cause of Hamlet's treatment of Ophelia, however, lay in the fact that, since his interview with his father's spirit, his entire nature had undergone change. He had taken on him vows of vengeance which must have modified his whole moral outlook. For him, henceforward, there must be no thoughts of lover's dalliance, or of amorous delights. He was an avenger of blood, with whose future it would be cruel in the extreme to interlink that of another. If successful in his mission, he would, in the estimation of his fellowmen, bear the brand of Cain about with him until his dying day; if he failed, death would be his portion, and widowhood hers whom he wedded. His action, therefore, was dictated by lofty sense of humanity and kindliness for her whom once he had loved.

Finally, Hamlet had weighed Ophelia in the balances and found her wanting. In the soul-searing anguish that came to him consequent on the revelation made by his father's ghost, he had instinctively turned to Ophelia for sympathy and consolation. In place of revealing herself a strong, self-reliant, resourceful woman, like the Portia either of Brutus or Bassanio, or like Rosalind, Beatrice, and Helena, on whose sympathy her lover or husband could have leant as on a rock immovable, her timid, feeble nature shrank from the spectacle of his awful misery; she sought refuge beneath the paternal ægis of Polonius, meekly accepted the rebukes of brother and father for giving ear at all to "Lord Hamlet's words," and became art and part with Polonius and Claudius in trying to wrest her lover's secret from him. This revealed to Hamlet how vain were his expectations of any help from Ophelia. In addition, her deception, following perhaps an instance of former willingness to act as his confidante

in matters of trivial moment, affecting his relations to the Court, proved to him, beyond a doubt, that his mission and his love could not remain co-existent. Desperate cases need desperate remedies, and Hamlet doubtless felt that he must break off his love-making with Ophelia in such a way, that no lingering hope would remain of any future renewal of his suit. Probably, as I have said above, he realised that in killing Claudius he doomed himself to death, and that it were kinder to be cruel now, than to involve the timid girl in his fate.

Of Hamlet, Coleridge writes: "I believe the character of Hamlet may be traced to Shakespeare's deep and accurate science in mental philosophy. In order to understand him it is essential that we should reflect on the constitution of our own minds. . . . If there be an overbalance of the contemplative faculty, man thereby becomes the creature of mere meditation, and loses his natural power of action. . . . In Hamlet, Shakespeare seems to have wished to exemplify the moral necessity of a due balance between our attention to the objects of our senses and our meditation on the working of our minds—an equilibrium between the real and the imaginary worlds. In Hamlet this balance is disturbed: his thoughts and the images of his fancy are far more vivid than his actual perceptions, and his perceptions, instantly passing through the medium of his contemplations, acquire, as they pass, a form and a colour not naturally their own." Hazlitt in turn says: "The character of Hamlet is itself a pure effusion of genius. It is not a character marked by strength of will or even of passion, but by refinement of thought and sentiment. Hamlet is as little of the hero as man can well be; but he is a young and princely novice, full of high enthusiasm and quick sensibility—the sport of circumstances, questioning with fortune and refining on his own feelings, and forced from the natural bias of his disposition by the strangeness of his

situation. He seems incapable of deliberate action, and is only hurried into extremities on the spur of the occasion, when he has no time to reflect." Dr. Maginn adds: "Hamlet is essentially a psychological exercise and study. The peculiar form of mental malady under which he suffers is of the subtlest character."

Professor Bradley takes an altogether different view from the Schlegel-Coleridge theory, which sees in *Hamlet* the tragedy of reflection, and according to which, the cause of the hero's delay was irresolution superinduced by an excess of the reflective or speculative habit of mind. He remarks: "The text does not bear out the idea that he was one-sidedly reflective and indisposed to action. Nobody who knew him seems to have noticed this weakness. Nobody regards him as a mere scholar who has never formed a resolution or executed a deed. In a Court which certainly would not admire such a person he is the observed of all observers. Though he has been disappointed of the throne, every one shows him respect; and he is the favourite of the people, who are not given to worship philosophers." [1]

The other characters are for the most part mere lay figures severely subordinated to the development of the story. Their characters are purposely left colourless that the stronger light of dramatic interest may fall on the leading personages.

The secret of the surpassing fascination Hamlet presents for all thoughtful minds lies in the fact that the problem at issue cannot be glibly stated in such terms as, "Was Hamlet a sane man feigning insanity, or an insane man, whose reason has been unhinged by a task too heavy for his powers being laid upon him?" Shakespeare intended that the true personality of the Prince should be wrapped in mystery, without any key being afforded by either rational speech or rational act. To obtain any solution of the problem, we must work back from conclusion to premises, in place of

[1] Bradley, *Lectures on Shakespearian Tragedy*, lecture iii. p. 108.

from premises to conclusion. In other words, the point for consideration is, not whether Hamlet be sane or otherwise, but whether such actions as those presented to us in the play are the deeds of a sane man or a madman. In this connection we must remember that there is no form of insanity at once so subtle and so hopeless, as that which hides itself in simply "intending to do, but never doing."

Section 3.—Troilus and Cressida. 1603

We come now to the drama which has proved an insoluble enigma to Shakespearian criticism. What was the object of the poet in writing *Troilus and Cressida?* Why should he so wantonly have satirised all the Grecian and Trojan heroes with the exception of Hector? No satisfactory explanation of the mystery has ever been presented save the statement that it was written during the terrible period of the problem plays.

The date of composition is a dual one, that is to say, a first draft of the play was executed about 1599, for in that year the dramatic satire, *Histriomastix*, contains the following allusion to a play on the subject, with a reference to Shakespeare's name—

> "*Troil.*—Come, Cressida, my cresset light,
> Thy face doth shine both day and night,
> Behold, behold thy garter blue,
> Thy knight his valiant elbow wears,
> That when he 'Shakes' his furious 'Speare'
> The foe in shivering fearful sort,
> May lay him down in death to snort."

In April 1599 Dekker and Chettle wrote for Henslowe[1] another drama, entitled at first *Troilus and Cressida*, but altered a little later to *The Tragedy of Agamemnon*. Then on "7th February 1602-3, Mr. Robertes booke of Troilus and Cresseda as yt is acted

[1] *Cf.* Henslowe's *Diary* for April 1599.

by the Lord Chamberlain's Men " was entered in the Stationers' Register, the addendum being put that it was to be printed when " Robertes had gotten sufficient authority for it." That this was Shakespeare's play is beyond question. Roberts,. however, failed to obtain authority, so that it was not until 28th January 1608-9 that this entry appeared in the Register, " Richard Bonian and Henry Walley, a book called the History of Troylus and Cressida," which preluded the appearance of the two Quarto editions, with the following title pages—

(i) *The* | *Historie of Troylus* | *and Cresseida* | As it was acted by the King's Majesties | *seruants at the globe.* | *Written by William Shakespeare.* | *London* | *Imprinted by* G. Eld *for* R. Bonian and H. Walley *and* | *are to be sold at the Spred Eagle in Paules* | *Church-yeard, over against the great North doore* | 1609.

(ii) *The* | *Famous Historie of Troylus and Cresseid* | *excellently expressing the beginning* | *of their loves, with the conceited wooing* | *of* Pandarus *Prince of* Licia | Written *by William Shakespeare* | *London* | *Imprinted by G. Eld for R. Bonian and H. Walley and* | *are to be sold at the Spred Eagle in Paules* | *Church-yeard, over against the* | *great North doore* | 1609.

The difference in the two title pages will be noted, though the text in both editions is absolutely identical. Unquestionably No. 1 (Q1) went forth with the statement to the world that *Troilus and Cressida* had been played by the King's Servants at " The Globe." Q2, otherwise the Second Quarto, had a preface added in which it was stated that there was " here a new play, never staled with the stage, never clapper-clawed with the palms of the vulgar, and yet passing full of the palm comical." The author of the preface then goes on to pay a high compliment to Shakespeare's comedies, " amongst all which there is none more witty than this." It is probable that Q1 was first issued for the theatre and, thereafter, the one with the

preface and the new title page for readers in general.[1]

In the Folio of 1623, *Troilus and Cressida* is found wedged in between the "Histories" and the "Tragedies." It is not mentioned in the Table of Contents, as though Messrs. Heminge and Condell were in doubt as to its precise classification. The text of the Folio is apparently based on a MS. revised by Shakespeare, the Quarto representing an earlier and in some respects more trustworthy copy of the same MS.

As regards the metrical characteristics of the play, out of the 3423 lines which constitute the play, 1186 are in prose and 2025 in blank verse, as against 1208 and 2490 in *Hamlet*. Of pentameter rhymes there are in the play 196, while rhyme forms an element in the play of no less than 8.6 per cent., as against 2.6 in *Hamlet*. With reference to feminine endings, these occur to the extent of 23.8 per cent., as against 22.6 in *Hamlet*, while six light endings but no weak endings are to be found in the play. Speech endings (or the coincidence of the close of a speech with the close of a verse, a mannerism of his early period Shakespeare gradually came to avoid) show 31.3 per cent., a decrease from those in *Hamlet* (51.6). There is no doggerel verse, properly speaking, in the play, short lines show an increase, while puns, conceits, and witticisms, prolonged to the point of exhaustion, have well-nigh all disappeared.

The main sources whence the material for *Troilus and Cressida* has been drawn are (1) the *Troilus and Criseyde* of Geoffrey Chaucer, though the reading of the character taken by the two authors is essentially distinct; (2) Henryson's *Testament of Creseide*. From these two came the "Love Story." Then the "War Story" in the play is based on (1) Lydgate's *Troy-book*; (2) Caxton's *Recuyell of the Histories of Troy*; (3) Chapman's *Homer* (published in 1598), where Shakespeare

[1] *Cf.* Cambridge Edition, and Larger Temple Edition.

found the insolent humours of Thersites. Probably also he consulted Greene's *Euphues, his Censure to Philautus*, and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

The scene of the play is Troy and the Grecian camp before it, but no attempt is made to describe any of those surrounding scenes which are painted by Homer with so vivid a brush in the *Iliad*. Shakespeare at no point enters into competition with the great Greek on that matter. It is in the painting of character where he leaves Homer so distinctly behind, even although it is with a satiric touch that he limns throughout.

The time-analysis gives four days as the duration of the action of the drama—

Day	I.	embracing Act	I. Sc. i.-ii.; Interval.
,,	II.	,,	,, I. ,, iii.; II., III.
,,	III.	,,	,, IV.; V. i.-ii. (part).
,,	IV.	,,	,, V. Sc. ii. (part), iii.-x.

The plot is simply the "loves" of Troilus and Cressida, how the latter led Troilus to suppose she was as chaste as ice and as pure as snow, while all the time she was a wanton at heart, virtuous only for lack of opportunity. The plot divides itself into two parts, the "Love Story" and the "War Story." The former deals with the love of Troilus for Cressida: the latter the course of the struggle between the Greeks and Trojans. Cressida does not appear in the *Iliad* at all, while Troilus is only once mentioned by Homer, as a son of Priam, a fearless charioteer, who was killed in early youth. It was Dares Phrygius who first mentions him in his Latin prose work of the sixth century A.D., *Historia de Excidio Trojæ*, which purported to be a translation of a journal kept during the siege.[1] Favouring the Trojans, and appealing to the distinctive superstitions and beliefs of the western nations of Europe that they were descended from the people of Priam, Dares paints Troilus as a noble youth, fond of all martial exercises. He also describes Briseida

[1] *Cf.* Boas, *Shakespeare and his Predecessors*, p. 370.

(as Cressida was first named), but Troilus was not then in love with her. That love-epos was the idea of a later writer, the Norman *trouvère* of the twelfth century, Benoit de Sainte-More, who in *Le Roman de Troie* added to the materials in Dares out of his imagination. Still further details were introduced by the Sicilian Guido Colonna, who translated Benoit's poem into Latin prose. Then Boccaccio took up the theme, from whom Chaucer received it, and thus introduced the legend into our literature. Shakespeare moulds the story to suit his own ends. The "War Story" he also changed materially, so that the plot, as far as it describes the siege of Troy, is largely his own.

The characters are also strangely re-conceived. Troilus, though a powerful creation and skilfully executed, is simply the portrait of a "green-goose lover," who worships a wanton and credits her words, without making any examination into the estimation wherein she was held by others. Granted he is all that a heroic young warrior should be, brave, courteous, staunch, noble, his wilful blindness towards patently evident faults in his lady-love, obscures these martial virtues, by making him simply a woman's whim and toy. So infatuated is he by his passion, that he fails to understand the broad hints which both Cressida and her pander-uncle, Pandarus, drop. That Cressida's heart is as innocently chaste as his own, Troilus fondly believes, and when Ulysses takes him to the tent of Calchas, to hear with his own ears his mistress perjure herself, he actually disbelieves the evidence of his senses. With the terrible truth once for all realised, however, came the desolation of heart which led him to disbelieve in the existence of truth and goodness in the world. Hitherto he had rated all men and women at his own high moral standard; henceforward he disbelieves the very existence of moral honour and moral purity.

Gervinus says of Troilus: "He idealises not only

the beauty of his chosen one, but her manners also; he will stake his life that there is no spot in her heart, and he finds the alluring coquette 'stubborn-chaste against all suit;' . . . Open and free in heart and hand, he gives what he has and shows what he thinks. To persist in his love with an 'eternal and fixed soul,' to be a pattern, a proverbial word for fidelity, this is his ambition; the moral of all his wit is plain and true;" that shall be his glory; that is, as he says, taking all together — his "vice!" Professor Verity says: "Troilus is the perfect lover and knight, passionate and pathetic in his boyish, buoyant idealism and fidelity, thinking no evil of others and expecting none;" while Professor Boas adds: "Troilus, apart from his infatuation, is a model of youthful heroism. Ulysses, the critical observer, grows eloquent in his praise, styling him 'manly as Hector but more dangerous.'" Throughout the play he justifies this lofty tribute. He is foremost in the field, and if Pandarus is to be trusted, returns with his sword bloodied and his helm more hacked than Hector's.

Cressida is a keenly sarcastic portrait of a sensual wanton, masquerading as an innocent maiden, and betraying the faith of a young and noble-hearted man. The conception of the character is profound. Shakespeare shows us in this great creation how deadly can be the devil's lure when he wears the garb of truth and virtue. The Cressida of the city of Troy and she of the Greek camp are two altogether different women. The former was a paragon of all virginal purity and piety; the latter is a sink of the vilest vice, its loathsomeness being heightened by the fact that it was masked by the outward veil of chaste beauty and innocent grace. She is a calculating wanton who can be true to no one two days on end, but ere one conquest has been fairly enjoyed, is already taking steps to encompass the next. Of pity towards the heart-broken Troilus she shows not a trace. When the deep

saddening consciousness comes to him that he has cast love's richest pearl before one who wallows like a filthy swine in the mire of vice, no regret touches her. She is already angling for the loves of the Grecian warriors, and terrible is the Nemesis which follows her betrayal of Troilus. She falls to the lot of Diomed—who had been her escort between the opposing lines—by literally "casting herself upon his passions." He is no raw youth (as Boas says) [1] dwelling like Troilus in a fool's paradise and seeing life and love through a rose-coloured haze, but an experienced man of the world who reads at a glance the character of the woman with whom he has to deal. By a method as suited to her character and as effective as Petruchio's with Kate, he tames her, and "the shallow coquette pays a heavy yet just price for her selfish levity, when she exchanges a chivalrous adorer for a harsh and imperious taskmaster."

Hazlitt remarks of her: "Cressida, in Chaucer, is represented as a grave, sober, considerate personage, who has an alternate eye to her character, her interest, her pleasure; Shakespeare's Cressida is a giddy girl, an unpractised jilt, who falls in love with Troilus as she afterwards deserts him, from mere levity and thoughtlessness of temper. She may be wooed and won to anything and from anything at a moment's warning."

Pandarus is the portrait of one who has lost the dignity of his manhood by playing the "broker-lackey" to his niece's vice. He is lost to every finer instinct of humanity, and is content to grovel amid the husks and shards of social contempt, provided he is allowed to batten on Cressida's sin. To him even Thersites is preferable because his vileness is open, while that of Pandarus is veiled by an outward semblance of goodness. Pandarus has given his name to that most bestial of all vocations, one in which only

[1] *Shakespeare and his Predecessors*, p. 376.

such would engage as have, like him, lost every attribute of moral goodness. In the play, however, so skilful a simulator of nobility is he, that Troilus blames himself for daring to ask so high-souled a man to help him in the wooing of his niece, declaring of the pair—

> " He's as tetchy to be woo'd to woo
> As she is stubborn-chaste against all suit."

Of the warriors on either side what can be said? With the exception of Hector and Ulysses, they are bitterly satiric portraits of men whom in Homer's vivid pages we had learned to love and admire. As Gervinus aptly remarks: " The aim of this drama was a parody of the 'crown of all heroic tales'—the Trojan myth. Upon this point every one seems agreed. Accordingly, on reading the play, no one will readily feel any sympathy or love for any character, any preference for any part, any pity for any suffering, any joy at any success, not even in the affair between Troilus and Cressida, which speaks to the heart more than any other incident in the piece."

The so-called " heroes " are represented as devoid of well-nigh every heroic attribute. Achilles is but a cowardly bully, who allows his amour with Polyxena, the daughter of Priam, to influence his actions in the field. Nay, he is devoid of the faintest spark of chivalry. After Hector has magnanimously spared him when he finds him worn and weary, Achilles in turn orders his Myrmidons to slaughter the unarmed Trojan champion, who begs him to wait until he has donned his armour and taken up his weapons. In place of conceding that, Achilles, who has behaved all through the play like a vain-glorious braggart, shouts—

> " Strike, fellows, strike; this is the man I seek.
> On, Myrmidons, and cry you all amain
> 'Achilles hath the mighty Hector slain.' "

Then when he is sure that the Trojan hero is dead, but not before, he proceeds to insult his corpse, talks, as

he sheaths his brand, " of his half-supped sword that frankly would have fed, pleased with this dainty bit thus goes to bed "—in a word, plays the blatant boaster over his fallen but greater foe.

Ajax is a jealous depreciator of the reputation of other men, and only appears to advantage when the nobility of Hector stimulates him to corresponding nobility. Agamemnon shows little of the dignity that won him Homer's phrase, *anax andrōn* (prince of men), while the others, Trojans and Greeks alike, save Ulysses and Hector, are conceived in a bitterly satiric spirit. Ulysses, however, is a noble character. All he says and does is inspired by ripe political wisdom. He does nothing rashly, consequently he does nothing wrong, and is one of Shakespeare's finest portraits. Hector is evidently the dramatist's hero. He makes him a model of knightly courtesy and courage, a man who never feared the face of man, who confronted death each day with an unflinching spirit, and finally met it at the end of all with calm resignation and heroism—met a hero's death inflicted by a coward's wiles.

The women are drawn with even a bitterer touch than the men. Helen is but a wheedling poppet with no individuality separate from Paris. The description given of her beauty by Troilus is charming, but a careful perusal of the passage (II. ii. 78), will convince the most cursory reader, that the choice terms apply merely to her exterior fascination, not to those charms of the mind which in Greece were prized so highly. Andromache was scarcely worthy to be Hector's wife, so fearful was she of his safety, and her perpetual timidity would pall ere long on such a soul as that of the valiant Trojan. Finally, Cassandra, the prophetess, seems only the boding voice of impending disaster to Troy. The whole drama is an enigma, and the key has not yet been found to unlock its mystery.

SECTION 4.—OTHELLO. 1604

The next play in our survey is the first of those three great tragedies which mark the high-water mark of Shakespeare's genius—*Othello, Macbeth, King Lear.* Of it Professor Bradley says: "Of all Shakespeare's tragedies, not even excepting *King Lear, Othello* is the most painfully exciting and the most terrible. From the moment when the temptation of the hero begins, the reader's heart and mind are held in a vice, experiencing the extremes of pity and fear, sympathy and repulsion, sickening hope and dreadful expectation. Evil is displayed before him, not indeed with the profusion found in *King Lear*, but forming, as it were, the soul of a single character, and united with an intellectual superiority so great that he watches its advance fascinated and appalled. He sees it, in itself almost irresistible, aided at every step by fortunate accidents and the innocent mistakes of its victims. He seems to breathe an atmosphere as fateful as that of *King Lear*, but more confined and oppressive, the darkness not of night but of a close-shut murderous room. His imagination is excited to intense activity, but it is the activity of concentration rather than of dilation." [1]

The date of the composition of the play cannot be given with any absolute exactitude. True the internal evidence of style, metre, and conception unite in referring the drama to a year somewhere between the terminal dates of 1600 and 1605. That is all, however, that can be stated. The diction is still the plastic speech of *Hamlet*, less variously interwoven perhaps with intellect and imagery, but quite as perfectly proportioned to the simpler needs of the play that is more passionful and less philosophical. The consensus of opinion, however, among critics assigns the composition of the play to the year 1604, the first

[1] Bradley, *Lectures on Shakespearian Tragedy*, lecture v. p. 176.

chronicled performance taking place in the November of that year before the Court at Whitehall. The earliest recorded publication was a Quarto edition issued in 1622 with the following title page: *The | Tragoedy of Othello | The Moore of Venice. As it hath been diverse times acted at the Globe | and at the Black-Friers by | his Majesties Servants | Written by William Shakespeare | London | Printed by N. O. for Thomas Walkley and are to be sold at his | shop, at the Eagle and Child, in Brittan's Bursse* | 1622.

To the play the publisher, whose dignity was not above the level of a pun, appended a preface which shows that six years after his death, and in the year before the publication of the collected edition of his works, Shakespeare's name and fame stood as high as ever.

"*The Stationer to the Reader*

"To set forth a book without an Epistle, were like to the old English proverb, *A blew coat without a badge*, and the Author being dead, I thought good to take that piece of work upon me. To commend it, I will not, for that which is good I hope every man will commend, without entreaty; and I am the bolder because the author's name is sufficient to vent his worke. Thus leaving every one to the liberty of judgment, I have ventered to print this play and leave it to the general censure.—THOMAS WALKLEY."

This Quarto (Q1) is apparently printed from an old acting edition of the play, and the singular thing is that Walkley had not disposed of his interest in *Othello* when the Folio of 1623 was being printed, for, in 1627, he assigned over to Mr. Richard Hawkins all his interest in the work. The Second Quarto was issued in 1630, and the Third in 1655.

What MS. was used in the First Quarto (Q1), or whence procured, is absolutely unknown. Walkley

says in his address to the reader that "the author is dead." It is therefore by no means likely that he had received the MS. from Shakespeare during the latter's lifetime and kept it lying idle for five or six years. Nor is it probable that the text of this Quarto was taken down surreptitiously by shorthand during a performance on the stage. The stage directions are not sufficient in number, nor descriptive enough in character, to indicate an eye-witness; and, though four of the acts are noted, there are no divisions into scenes. Yet, as Furness says, there can be no doubt that Walkley's is an original text, and that it is not the same as the Folio. That being so, and as it could not have come from Shakespeare, and moreover was not taken down by shorthand, there is no other course open than to conclude that it was a play-house copy, and that possibly it had been stolen, in order to be used. Between the First Quarto and the First Folio there are many differences. In the latter appear about 160 lines that are entirely omitted in the former, while there are only some ten lines or thereby in the Quarto which do not find a place in the Folio.

The metrical characteristics of the play are as follow: Out of the total number of lines in the piece, 3324, only 541 are in prose, against 1186 for *Troilus and Cressida*, and 1208 for *Hamlet*. Of the 2783 lines that remain, 2672 are in blank verse, while there are only 86 pentameter rhymes in the play, and rhyme is present altogether only to the extent of 3.2 per cent., as against 2.7 in *Hamlet*. As regards feminine or double endings, they register 28.1 per cent., as against 22.6 for *Hamlet*, while there are two light endings and no weak endings in the play. Coming next to end-stopped and run-on lines, we find that the verse of Shakespeare is rapidly becoming more flexible; end-stopped lines are steadily decreasing, while enjambed lines are as steadily increasing. *Othello*, however, shows a retrogression, as the percentage of enjambed

lines is only 19.5 per cent., as against 23.1 in *Hamlet*, and 27.4 in *Troilus*. That is due, however, to the lyrical character of some of the speeches. As regards the speech-ending test, I cannot agree with the figures of König (to whose tables in his *Der Vers in Shakspere's Dramen* I am greatly indebted, though in every case I have checked his enumeration). I make the percentage there 58.4, as against König's 41.4.[1] Of classical allusions there are very few that are not in keeping with the context of the speeches, while doggerel verse, puns, conceits, conventional imagery and wit drawn out to the point of exhaustion, have all largely disappeared. The general testimony of the metrical characteristics, therefore, would place *Othello* very early in the Third Period, some of the verse even seeming to be earlier in point of style than that in *Hamlet*.

The scene of the play is located, in the first act, in Venice, and thereafter in a seaport in the island of Cyprus. The time-analysis of the play, as drawn up by Mr. Fleay, is as follows—

Day I.	embracing Act	I.;	Interval for the voyage.
,, II.	,,	,, II.	
,, III. (Sunday)	,,	,, III.;	Interval of a week at least.
,, IV.	,,	,, IV. Sc. i.-iii.;	V. i.-ii.

As to the sources of the play, the plot of *Othello* is founded on the twenty-seventh of the hundred novels in Cinthio's *Hecatommithi* (Decade iii. Novel 7), which relates how "a Moorish captain weds a citizen of Venice." In this an ensign plays the part of Iago the ancient. He succeeds in making the Moor believe in his own wife's guilt, and he kills Disdemona (as the heroine is called) before the Moor's eyes with a stocking filled with sand. They then pull down the ceiling of the room in which they were, and rushing out, pretend that Disdemona has been killed by its fall.

[1] Dr. Bradley's figures approximate nearly to my own; he makes the speech-ending percentage 58.6.

As this is disbelieved, the ensign accuses the Moor of murdering his own wife, and the latter is accordingly tortured and banished. The novel foreshadowed all the incidents of the play, its hero was the ensign, its theme his various machinations, Disdemona and the Moor having merely a subordinate interest as his victim and his dupe. It was, however, in the character of the Moor that, for Shakespeare, the tragic problem lay!

The plot of *Othello* is a masterpiece. The late Sir Henry Irving some years ago remarked to the writer that the plot of *Othello* alone was to him sufficient argument that Francis Bacon never wrote the plays of Shakespeare. Only a consummate actor-dramatist, conversant with every trick in entrances and exits, was the constructor of that drama. Professor R. G. Moulton also says: " In both Economy and Movement *Othello* is a masterpiece. Its plot presents a number of separate intrigues or ' other ' actions, gradually by the course of the play merged in one, which rushes on to a tragic consummation and reaction." [1]

The main thread in the plot is the love of Othello and Desdemona, and how that love is betrayed by Iago. There are, however, six subordinate threads. (1) The illicit *liaison* between Bianca and Cassio. (2) Roderigo's " pursuit " of Desdemona. (3) Iago's intrigue against Roderigo. (4) Iago's intrigue to gain Cassio's place. (5) Iago's intrigue to get rid of Cassio altogether. (6) Iago's intrigue to destroy the happiness of Othello and Desdemona. Now all these become merged in one, the slaughter of Desdemona by Othello. Iago has been getting money from his dupe, Roderigo, on the promise to further his suit to Desdemona. He wishes to keep up the supply as long as possible, therefore he arouses jealousy in Roderigo's mind of Cassio. His plans were both acutely and

[1] " ' Othello ' as a Type of Plot," by R. G. Moulton—*Transac. New Shake. Soc.*; also Masefield, *Shakespeare*, pp. 180-186.

skilfully laid, and would not have failed of success, if he had not implicitly trusted that his wife Emilia would become his tool and do as he desired. She declined to be his accomplice, and having penetrated his subtle web of intrigue, denounced her husband, Iago, as the deceiver of Othello and the maligner of the innocent Desdemona, though her own death was the price. Alas! that it came too late; the deed was done, and only retribution could recompense what swift prevision should have prevented.

The plot, as a whole, is one of the most perfectly constructed in the entire range of the Shakespearian drama. It is a skilful piece of histrionic architecture, and reveals both the careful technical craftsman and the supreme imaginative artist. As Ulrici says: "Beauty of composition—like every other formal beauty—demands above all things, harmony, clearness, and design; that is, it demands that the final aim of the action, the point to which the dramatic development finally leads, should, from beginning to end, be perceptible through the separate scenes, and that the characters, the action, and the plot should be developed as rapidly as clearly. This beauty of arrangement is exhibited in the highest perfection in *Othello*."

Schlegel also says: "The public events of the first two acts show us Othello in his most glorious aspect, as the support of Venice and the terror of the Turks; they serve to withdraw the story from the mere domestic circle, which is done in *Romeo and Juliet* by the dissensions between the houses of Montague and Capulet. No eloquence is capable of painting the overwhelming force of the catastrophe in *Othello*, the pressure of feelings which measure out in a moment the abysses of eternity."[1] To this Macaulay adds: "*Othello* is perhaps the greatest work in the world.

[1] A. W. Schlegel, *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*, vol. ii. p. 189.

From what does it derive its power? From the clouds? From the ocean? From the mountains? Is it not rather from love strong as death and from jealousy cruel as the grave?"

The three principal characters of the drama are Othello, Desdemona, and Iago. The first-named is a strong study of a great nature, magnificent in magnanimity, supreme in a calm, cool, resourceful courage, which ever shines the brighter, the deadlier the danger. The Moor was one of those men who, like Hannibal, the glorious Carthaginian, have but one end in life, viz., to wage war successfully. After doing so, and gaining honours untold, suddenly a new object in living enters his life. He woos and wins the beautiful Venetian maiden, Desdemona, daughter of the magnifico, Brabantio, and henceforth he is a man with divided interests. His strength in the past has lain in his undeviating directness of purpose. His efforts now are dispersed over diverse aims. Love and war cannot patiently pull together, and his divided attention tells on his adaptability to circumstances. Formerly everything took second place to the effective prosecution of the campaign. Now, the campaign takes second place to the paramount consideration, "What is to become of Desdemona?" She goes with him to Cyprus, because he cannot bear to part from her, and, though she knows it not, she is going to her death. Othello's faith in men proceeds from ignorance rather than knowledge, and he places implicit confidence in Iago, long after a less open nature would have suspected treachery or at least deceit. Othello's nobility of nature stands in the way of his clear perception of things. It is, however, in the internal conflict which takes place in Othello's soul, when the passion of jealousy is kindled in a mind naturally free from aught of the kind, that Shakespeare's supreme psychological skill comes into evidence. As has been indicated, the free, open, un-

suspecting nature of the Moor is noted by Iago himself, and his noble and heroic disposition would appear less likely to be subject to jealousy. Yet this is the very form of revenge which Iago with surpassing skill selects. Why? Because it is the weak side of Othello's ethical armour. His life previous to his meeting with Desdemona has not been immaculate. He has proved the frailty of other wives, and this possibility Iago utilises to suggest the hypothetical frailty of Desdemona. For fiendish subtilty, the suggestion might well emanate from the "Father of Lies" himself.

Of this character Thackeray writes: "Othello is a union not only of dissimilar qualities but of dissimilar natures. He is a civilised barbarian. All that we know of his birth is that it is fetched from men of royal siege. How or when he became a Christian we are not told: but it is certain he must have passed his childhood in a harem, acquiring with his earliest impressions the jealousy and suspicion respecting women and the domestic despotism of the Mohammedan Court. His youth and manhood were spent in military exercises, and we find him at the opening of the play, somewhat declined into the vale of years, a grave and dignified soldier. All the barbarian is obliterated in the first two acts, nothing can be more calm or more polished. . . . But the suspicion aroused on the very morning after the arrival in Cyprus, by Iago's dark hints, acts on Othello like a poison. It sets on fire all the old Mohammedan tendency to jealousy which a European life seemed to have eradicated." [1]

Dowden's view is a little different. He says: "Othello, with his barbaric innocence and regal magnificence of soul, must cease to live the moment he ceases to retain faith in the purity and goodness which were to him the highest and the most real things on earth. Or if he live, life must become to him a cruel agony,

[1] Thackeray, *Edinburgh Review*, January 1854.

. . . yet such prolonged agony is joy in comparison with the earthy-life-in-death of such a soul as that of Iago. The noble nature is taken in the toils because it is noble. . . . There is, therefore, Shakespeare would have us understand, something more inimical to humanity than suffering—viz., an incapacity for noble pain. To die as Othello dies is indeed grievous; but to live as Iago lives, devouring the dust and stinging—this is more appalling!" [1]

Schlegel says: "The Moor seems noble, frank, confiding, grateful for the love shown him, and he *is* all this and moreover a hero that spurns at danger, a worthy leader of an army, a faithful servant of the State; but the mere physical force of passion puts to flight in one moment all his acquired and accustomed virtues, and gives the upper place to the savage in him over the moral man." [2]

Desdemona was a "womanly woman"—that is to say, she had all the softness, the sweetness, the clinging tenderness, and the innocent trust of one who, having attained to the summit of her desires, looks for nothing further. For Desdemona to have been guilty of the sin wherewith she was charged, was as impossible as for a mirror to return a different countenance to that of the person looking into it. So transparent was her innocence that, if she had fallen, the whole world must have known it within an hour, for the eidolon of purity within her soul must then have perished. Desdemona was not a strong nature, not a great nature, not a far-seeing nature, but she was pre-eminently a pure nature, and her purity, as in the case of Ophelia, was the palladium of her strength. Othello may or may not have been sinfully intimate with Emilia before marriage. It is nought to her, and that which drives Iago to desperation is never so much as considered by Desde-

[1] Dowden, *Shakespeare's Mind and Art*, p. 242.
[2] A. W. Schlegel, *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*, vol. ii. p. 189.

mona. Othello *now* was hers, body and soul. To Desdemona, Othello was her world. The sun of existence rose and set in his smile, and for him to frown was to cloud the sunshine of her world completely until the cause were known and removed. She lived in love. It was the "be-all" and the "end-all" of her existence; but it was a love which suffered long and was kind towards the object of its affection. Death to Desdemona would have been as welcome as her marriage-bed if thereby she could have helped Othello. Iago's web of lies, if woven against Othello in place of against herself, would never have produced a scintilla of influence in breaking down her faith. Therefore, I maintain hers was the deeper love, against which many waters might have arisen to overwhelm it, but would not have prevailed.

Dr. Samuel Johnson says of her: "The soft simplicity of Desdemona, confident of merit and conscious of innocence, her artless perseverance in her suit, and her slowness to suspect that she can be suspected, are such proofs of Shakespeare's skill in human nature as I suppose it is vain to seek in any modern writer."[1] Mrs. Jameson remarks: "Desdemona, as a character, comes nearest to Miranda both in herself as a woman, and in the perfect simplicity and unity of the delineation: the figures are differently draped, but the proportions are the same. There is the same modesty, tenderness, and grace; the same artless devotion in the affections; the same predisposition to wonder, to pity, to admire; the same almost ethereal refinement and delicacy: but all is pure poetic nature within Miranda and around her; Desdemona is more associated with the palpable realities of every-day existence, and we see the form and habits of society tinting her language and deportment: no two beings can be more alike in character, nor more distinct as

[1] Johnson's *Shakespeare*: "Othello."

individuals."[1] So also J. A. Heraud says: "The tragedy, however, might not have been possible at all, but for a defect in Desdemona's character. Her passion was romantic, and there exists fiction in whatever is romantic. She suffers from illusion and loves to be deluded. If she is self-deceived, she likewise deceives others. It is on this ground that Brabantio warns Othello, 'She has deceived her father and may thee!' In word, deed, thought, she must have been guilty of falsehood; and virtuous as she otherwise is, we find in the development of the drama that she has one foible. It is the slightest of foibles, but one frequently fatal—a habit of fibbing. From a timidity of disposition she frequently evades the truth, when attention to its strict letter would raise a difficulty."[2] Hazlitt remarks: "The character of Desdemona is inimitable, both in itself and as it appears in contrast with Othello's groundless jealousy, and with the foul conspiracy of which she is the innocent victim. Her beauty and external graces are only indirectly glanced at; we see her visage in her mind; her character everywhere predominates over her person. . . . Her resignation and angelic sweetness of temper do not desert her at the last. The scenes, in which she laments and tries to account for Othello's estrangement from her, are exquisitely beautiful."

Dr. Bradley says: "Desdemona, the 'eternal womanly' in its most lovely and adorable form, simple and innocent as a saint, radiant with that heavenly purity of heart which men worship the more because nature so rarely permits it to themselves, had no theories about universal brotherhood, and no phrases about 'one blood in all the nations of the earth,' or 'barbarian, Scythian, bond or free;' but when her soul came in sight of the noblest soul on earth, she made nothing of the shrinking of her senses, but

[1] Mrs. Jameson, *Characteristics of Shakespeare's Women*, vol. ii. p. 31.
[2] Heraud, *Shakespeare, his Inner Life*, p. 268.

and has drawn a monster who has no archetype in human nature. Now we suspect that an Italian audience in the fifteenth century would have felt very differently. Othello would have inspired nothing but detestation and contempt. The folly with which he trusts to the friendly professions of a man whose promotion he had obstructed—the credulity with which he takes unsupported assertions and trivial circumstances for unanswerable proofs—the violence with which he silences the exculpation until the exculpation can only aggravate his misery, would have excited the abhorrence and disgust of the spectators. The conduct of Iago they would assuredly have condemned; but they would have condemned it as we condemn that of his victim. Something of interest and respect would have mingled with their disapprobation. The readiness of his wit, the clearness of his judgment, the skill with which he penetrates the dispositions of others and conceals his own, would have ensured to him a certain portion of their esteem." [1]

The other characters in the drama worthy of mention are few. Emilia is a vivid study in the Flemish style. She is essentially ignoble and common in her instincts. Nevertheless, the thorough vulgarity of the woman, her loose principles and plebeian ideas, united to a high degree of spirit, energetic feeling, strong sense, and low cunning, are all a fine foil for the simple purity of Desdemona. Of her, Oechelhaüser says: "In her whole conduct Emilia is chargeable with only one fatal error; viz., obtaining at her husband's request the lost handkerchief upon which hangs such a fearful tragedy. She certainly had no suspicion of the evil purpose of Iago, to whom she stands in a relation of cold indifference. Putting this one error out of sight, she is the faithful, devoted servant and friend of Desdemona, the unterrified asserter of her innocence, even when she is threatened with death." [2]

[1] Macaulay, *Edinburgh Review*, 1827, vol. xlv. p. 272.
[2] Wilhelm Oechelhaüser *Othello*.

Cassio is a bluff, true-hearted, kindly, but slightly blundering man, whose chief fault is over-confidence in himself; while Brabantio, the father of Desdemona, is a capital portrait of the Venetian senator or magnifico, filled with all the pride of his race and place, yet with a father's heart beating below his splendid robe.

Such is this marvellous drama of *Othello!* No one can fail to be struck by the amazing genius wherewith the long-drawn-out agony of the conclusion is maintained at the high level of dramatic intensity. Only in the *Agamemnon* of Æschylus do we discern an approach to the same extraordinary power of sustaining tragic agony, for so long a period, at a high level of intensity.

Section 5.—Measure for Measure. 1604

We come next to one of the distinctive "problem-plays" of Shakespeare's dramatic life. The mysterious scandal which seems to have attached itself to his own name, and to which he refers in the "Sonnets" (100 126), probably suggested the *motif* of this somewhat gloomy play, the moral drawn from which is that the safeguards of mere virtue are naught when the flood-gates of passion are opened. Only the restraints of religion can then avail.

Of this play the great American scholar, the late H. N. Hudson, said: "*Measure for Measure* is among the least attractive yet most instructive of Shakespeare's plays. Surpassingly rich both in poetry and wisdom, it has, however, as Hazlitt hath remarked, 'an original sin in the nature of the subject which prevents our taking a cordial interest in it.' This inherent sinfulness forbids me to dwell much on the events of the play. For political philosophy, Blackstone himself might, and for aught I know may, have gone to school to it with advantage, while for height of moral argument and religious heroism, it occupies

perhaps the summit of human conception; the tone of sentiment and character developed by the events of the drama, being as lofty and pure as these events themselves are repulsive." [1]

Gervinus, pursuing the same line of thought, remarks: "The vein of deep thought, which so strikingly distinguishes the works of Shakespeare's latter period, beats in its fullest pulse in *Measure for Measure*, the drama most closely linked to the comedies last discussed [*Twelfth Night* and *Much Ado about Nothing*]. . . . The play has found little favour with most English critics, Hunter, Knight, and others; even an admirer like Coleridge called this play the most painful, or rather the only painful work among Shakespeare's dramas. He considered the comic and tragic parts alike bordering on the detestable, the one disgusting and the other terrible, while he called the pardon and the marriage of Angelo degrading to the female character, and not in conformity with the demands of severe indignant justice." [2]

The date of the composition of *Measure for Measure* is the same as that of *Othello*, viz., 1604. Some critics have maintained that the two passages (I. i. 68-70; II. iv. 27-30)—

> —"I love the people,
> But do not like to stage me to their eyes,"

and—

> "The general, subject to a well-wish'd king,
> Quit their own part, and in obsequious fondness
> Crowd to his presence, where their untaught love
> Must needs appear offence."—

contained an apology for the distant and somewhat ungracious manner of James I. on his entry into England.[3] The evidence thus given corroborates that

[1] *Lectures on Shakespeare*, lecture viii. vol. i. p. 288.

[2] Gervinus, *Commentaries* (single volume edition), p. 486.

[3] *Cf.* in this connection the passage in *Myrrha, the Mother of Adonis*, by Barksted (1607), beginning—

> "And like as when some sudden exstasie
> Seizeth the nature of a sicklie man."

from the metrical tests, and the play has parallelisms with *Hamlet*, *Troilus and Cressida*, and *Othello*, as well as with *All's Well that Ends Well*, in the former period.

The play was first printed in the Folio of 1623, the text being probably taken from the theatre copy, as it abounds in corruptions and perplexing passages.

Shakespeare's immediate authority for the materials of the drama was the *Promos and Cassandra* of George Whetstone, published in 1578, who four years later retold the story in his prose work, *The Heptameron of Civil Discourses* (1582). Not only did Shakespeare draw upon Whetstone, but it is evident he also consulted Cinthio's *Hecatommithi* (Decade viii. Novel 5). This novel was founded on an actual occurrence of 1547, which was narrated by a Hungarian student, Joseph Macarius, to a friend in Sarvar. In his version, the heroine actually undergoes dishonour, in order to save her condemned husband, whose execution, however, is carried into effect. She appeals to the imperial governor of the province of Milan, who causes the judge to marry her, to pay her 3000 ducats, and then to lose his head.[1] Succeeding writers, however, have endeavoured to soften the penalties.

The metrical tests furnish us with the following facts: The total length of the play is 2809 lines. Of these, 1134 are in prose, showing an advance upon *Othello*, but a slight retrogression as compared with *Troilus and Cressida* (1186) and *Hamlet* (1208). Of the remaining lines, after the prose ones have been deducted, 1574 are in blank verse, a considerable decrease as compared with *Othello* (2672), *Troilus and Cressida* (2025), and *Hamlet* (2490). Of pentameter rhymes there are only 73, with a total percentage of rhyme in the play of 3.6. Feminine or double endings record 26.1 of a percentage, against 28.1 in *Othello*, while of light endings there are seven examples, but none of weak endings. Of run-on or enjambed lines

[1] Cf. *Notes and Queries*, 29th July 1893.

the percentage has now risen to 27.4, while speech endings reveal a great advance to 51.4 per cent. All the other characteristics of the early mannerisms, the doggerel verse, the classical allusions foisted with but slender applicability into the verse, puns, conceits, wire-drawn wit and stereotyped imagery — have disappeared. The verse shows an increasing tendency towards terse, nervous, pithy, thought-laden lines.

The scene is laid in Vienna, and the time-analysis of the play gives four days as the duration of the action—

Day I. embracing Act I. Sc. i. This is a kind of prelude after which an Interval must be supposed in order to allow the new governor of the city to get into harness. The rest of the action is comprised in three days.
,, II. embracing Act I. Sc. ii., and ends with Act IV. Sc. ii.
,, III. ,, ,, IV. ,, iii., and ends with Act IV. Sc. iv.
,, IV. ,, ,, IV. ,, v.-vi. and the whole of Act V.

The plot is simply the story of the Unjust Judge dramatised. Vincentio, the reigning Duke of Vienna, determines to leave his capital for a time so that a new and a severer hand than his own might redress many of the abuses that have crept in. He therefore entrusts all power to his deputy, Angelo, a man seemingly of the highest character and of approved uprightness. A law, recently passed to suppress the prevailing immorality, enacted that any man who should seduce a virgin must lose his life. Just as the Duke leaves the city, Claudio, a young gentleman of the highest rank, who is "handfasted," *i.e.*, trysted or betrothed to his own cousin—a ceremony almost equivalent to marriage—is discovered to have made the young lady *enceinte*. He appears before Judge Angelo, and is condemned to death. Great efforts are put forth to save him. To no one, however, would Angelo listen until Claudio's sister, Isabella, a novice, who is looking forward to becoming a nun, appears to beg for his life. When he sees her, Angelo, whose blood was said to be so free from all taint of passion

that it might be "snow-broth," suddenly conceives for her the most violent love, and tells her that if she will consent to dishonour at his hands, her brother shall go free. She indignantly refuses, but Angelo tells her to think over the matter. Meantime the Duke, who had not gone away, but under the disguise of a friar was keenly scrutinising his deputy's acts, comes to her and persuades her to profess to agree, stating that when the time comes to fulfil her pledge to Angelo, the latter's own trysted wife, whom before marriage he had left because through misfortune she had lost her dowry, would take her place. Thus it fell out. Meantime Angelo, fearful that if he pardoned Claudio intelligence of it might leak out, sent orders to the prison that the young man was to be executed at an earlier hour than had been arranged, also that his head must be sent to the deputy to show that the deed had been carried into effect. Meantime, as if to reveal the utter hypocrisy of Angelo, Elbow the Constable—who must certainly be first cousin of the inimitable Dogberry—passes over the stage, conveying to prison one of the evil women of the town, with her husband Pompey, and a richly humorous scene occurs between the fantastic Lucio and Pompey, all tending to bring out that Angelo is posing as the stamper-out of the very sin whereof he is on the eve of being himself guilty.

That same night "Mariana of the Moated Grange," Angelo's deserted *fiancée*, took Isabella's place at the horrible meeting in

> —"the garden circummured with brick,
> Whose western side is with a vineyard back'd."

She takes this office upon her by order of the Duke, who had to reveal his identity to one or two of his people to ensure his plans being carried into effect. He also contrived that the head of Ragozene, a noted pirate, who had died of fever in the prison, should be

sent to Angelo in place of that of Claudio, whom he had somewhat resembled in look. On the morrow the notice is suddenly given that the Duke is unexpectedly returning, and that any who have complaints to lodge against the actions of the officers of justice during his absence must voice them at the city gate. Thither Isabella and Mariana proceed. Acting under the Duke's own instructions as friar, they appeal to him for justice, and gradually Angelo is unmasked. He is sentenced to death, but is spared at Isabella's entreaty, backing up that of Mariana, but is compelled to marry the latter, while the Duke himself weds Isabella.

The drama is indeed a sombre comedy. To comic relief the only approach is in the wanton and somewhat "broad" sallies of Lucio, whose humour is rather horseplay than fun. The atmosphere of the piece is gloomy, while its horizon-line is piled deep with the thunder-clouds of retribution, shot through ever and anon with the lightnings of ethical expiation. With *All's Well that Ends Well* it evidently has close affinity, the same clumsy method of righting a conjugal wrong being resorted to in both cases. As Courthope says of the matter: "The artifice is one which befits comedy rather than tragedy, and after the intense imaginative emotion in the characters of Claudio, Angelo, and Isabella, the ease with which the abominable wickedness of Angelo is dismissed in consideration of the successful trick by which he has been duped, attenuates the moral impression which the play is otherwise qualified to create." [1]

The characters as a whole seem oppressed by the subtle moral consciousness that responsibility pervades all the actions of life. There is even a flavour of Puritanic self-sufficiency in more than one of the personages, and Isabella herself, with all her nobility and purity, makes rather too little allowance for the

[1] Courthope, *History of English Poetry*, vol. iv. p. 139.

shortcomings of average human nature, and for its preference for cakes and ale to bread and water. The thunders of Sinai and the unbending commands of the Decalogue seem sounding all through this marvellous production.[1] Dr. Furnivall sums up its teaching in such words as these: "We turn to *Measure for Measure*, and in this, the one so-called comedy of the 'Period,' have a moral of this kind preached, that in the way you have sinned, in the same way shall you be punished; atonement you shall make, not shirk." Though this play was called a comedy, we notice the strong contrast of its gloom of lust and filth with the bright, health-giving, out-door air of all but the last of Shakespeare's second-time comedies. Yet above this lust and filth rose radiant as a star the figure of the "enskyed and sainted" Isabella, God's handmaiden, who could not be unclean.

The two principal characters are of course Isabella and Angelo. All the others, save perhaps the Duke, in his dual rôle of friar and ruler, are but secondary and subordinate. Isabella's moral grandeur is what chiefly strikes us in connection with her. She is a saint, with an atmosphere of holy purity and sublime unworldliness about her, yet, despite all her sweetness and gentleness, towards any moral weakness and frailty, there is an unsympathetic hardness peeping out at times from her spirit, that tends rather to arouse reverence for her lofty ethical excellence than love for her womanly pity. The vestal dignity wherewith she rebukes Lucio's unhallowed jokes is what we should expect, yet, when it suits her, she allows him to speak on, until she learns from him the message he has brought from her brother, a course which savours just a trifle of the worldly wisdom of the serpent. She can mount to supreme heights of holy indignation at the very suggestion by her brother that she should stoop to evil to save him, but she has no sympathy with

[1] *Cf.* Ward, *English Dramatic Literature*, vol. ii. p. 153.

his youthful shrinking from death. To her the last enemy would be welcomed as "a bridegroom beloved" had she to choose between it and dishonour. Easy would it have been for her to die for Claudio were the only other alternative loss of honour. Throughout her interviews with the Duke, it is her saintliness rather than her sympathy that is in evidence. Her celibate predilections, however, do not penetrate very deep into her nature, for when the Duke intimates that he has "a motion much imports your good," the purpose of which is—

> "What's mine is yours, and what is yours is mine,"

she has not a word to say in opposition thereto, and by silence gives consent. Her whole nature is, if the word be allowed, "supramundane" in its aloofness from the frailties which beset our poor human nature. Hazlitt evidently felt this strain predominating in her character when he says: "We are not greatly enamoured of Isabella's rigid chastity, though she could not act otherwise than she did. We do not feel the same confidence in the virtue that is sublimely good at another's expense as if it had been put to some less disinterested trial." [1] And Arthur Symons says of her: "Isabella's very courage and purity and intellectual light do but serve to deepen the darkness [of the city] when we conceive of her as but one sacrifice the more . . . thus, it is the nobility of Isabella which attracts Angelo; her freedom from the tenderest signs of frailty, her unbiassed intellect, her regard for justice, her religious sanctity." [2] Finally, Mrs. Jameson says: "Isabella gives us the impression of one who has passed under the ennobling discipline of suffering and self-denial; a melancholy charm tempers the natural vigour of her mind; her spirit seems to stand upon an eminence and look down upon the world as if already

[1] Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*.
[2] Arthur Symons, in Henry Irving Shakespeare.

"enskyed and sainted"; and yet, when brought in contact with that world which she inwardly despises, she shrinks back with all the timidity natural to her cloistral education." [1]

And now what of Angelo? An unconscious hypocrite until his meeting with Isabella, he loved to pose as a virtuous man, because virtue was the essence of respectability, and respectability was the god of Angelo's world. He was a model of all the *bourgeois* virtues, a rigid churchgoer, and exemplary in his attendance at confession, a man who spoke in measured tones and with well-weighed words, whose eyes never wandered after beauty's coquettish glance, and who neither by word nor sign showed that any woman had made the faintest impression on his heart. In his own mind he was assured that he was immune from all the moral weaknesses to which flesh is heir, until the temptation of the devil took the grace and garb of Isabella. Angelo, however, was a quibbling precisian. He had satisfied his conscience that he was justified in leaving "Mariana of the Moated Grange," the sister of the great naval hero, Frederick, because seemingly her dowry was lost when his vessel was wrecked, inasmuch as it would not have been *comme il faut* for one so high in station to wed a penniless lady, long and illustrious though her pedigree might be. He had been ready to fulfil his part of the contract and to give—himself! She, however, had failed in hers—viz., to supply the dowry, which was to counterbalance his transcendent merits. Therefore the marriage was broken off, not a thought being given, by this pre-eminently scrupulous gentleman, that a broken heart might result from the broken promise. Angelo was virtuous only because he worshipped the ideal of social respectability rather than the ideal of human sympathy. His purity was founded on convention, not on conviction, and when the temptation to sin grew hot, his safeguards were

[1] Mrs. Jameson, *Shakespeare's Heroines*—"Isabella."

literally consumed before his eyes, and he fell. When he fell, he fell low indeed in the scale of human goodness, inasmuch as he would have recklessly sacrificed another's life, along with his own honour and fidelity, to gain his foul end.

Of him Gervinus says: "A sacred halo surrounds this man, who enjoys an unapproachable reputation for integrity and purity of life. He presents the strange phenomenon of an isolated Stoic in the midst of a Sybarite city. We see him with a serious, suitable bearing, with sober countenance and well-considered words, as if he would frighten away all kind of levity. The Duke calls him severe and precise; he scarcely allows that his blood flows or that 'his appetite is more to bread than stone.' In the eyes of the wanton debauchees he is a man 'whose blood is very snow-broth,' one who has blunted the natural stings of the senses with profits of the mind, study and fasts. . . . When Escalus, subsequently, on his severity towards the immoral, reminds him of the possibility of a similar crime in himself, he does not hesitate to call down upon himself punishment and blame, and proudly to answer, ''Tis one thing to be tempted, another thing to fall.'" [1]

Professor Courthope also remarks: "The character of Angelo is a profound study of man's capacity for self-deception. He is distinguished for *virtù*. In pursuit of his own selfish aims and desires he shows himself resolute, relentless, and insensible to the claims of others, as when he deserts Mariana. Yet, as his conduct has not injured him in the eyes of the world, he is not conscious of the baseness of his own nature, which the clear-sighted Duke is resolved to test by placing him in a position of authority." [2]

The other characters are more or less subordinate. Claudio is a fine portrait of the average man, neither

[1] Gervinus, *Commentaries on Shakespeare*, p. 489.
[2] Courthope, *History of English Poetry*, vol. iv. chap. v. p. 138.

very good nor very bad, willing to submit to the laws of religion and of honour, but from the laxity of the morals prevailing around him, but feebly armed against the impulses of passion. He at first faces death with stoical resolution, but, as he thinks on all that life holds of pleasant and profitable, the fear of death overwhelms him, and he cries, "Sweet sister, let me live." Her indignation, however, recalls his nobler nature, and he prepares to die like a man.

The Duke is merely a sort of *Deus ex machinâ* to bring about the *denoûment*. He is, however, a man of moderation, gentleness, and calmness, one who loves his people, his earnest desire being always to know himself, though it also seemed a kind of necessity with him to know men and to test the instruments of his rule. He is not himself of a sensual nature, but he does not, like Angelo, judge those who are so with unreasonable severity and strictness. Laws against immorality therefore became somewhat lax, and to confer new authority on these laws an interim ruler had to be appointed. Hence Angelo's chance and Angelo's fall. Escalus is a noble-spirited old senator, full of loyal love for his Prince and ready either to rule or to serve as he might direct. Without his help the Duke could not have carried out his plans. Lucio, "the fantastic," is introduced simply to tickle the ears of the groundlings, along with the superbly humorous Elbow and Pompey the Clown. "Mariana of the Moated Grange" has become the type of deserted love. She is a pathetic and a touching figure, but somewhat too nebulous to be impressive. Her personality nowadays is rather Tennysonian than Shakespearian.[1]

[1] See Tennyson's poem *Mariana*.

SECTION 6.—MACBETH. 1606

We now reach the play which, by many critics, is regarded as Shakespeare's masterpiece—the mighty tragedy of *Macbeth*. Whether *King Lear* or it be esteemed the greater, one thing is certain, that these two dramas represent, along with *Othello*, the most stupendous creations of genius our world has yet seen, the *Prometheus Bound* of the Greek Æschylus and the *Faust* of the German Goethe being the only works that can be regarded as even approaching them.

Of the play itself Dr. Samuel Johnson says: "It is deservedly celebrated for the propriety of its fictions, and the solemnity, grandeur, and variety of its action; but it has no nice discrimination of character, the events are too great to admit the influence of particular dispositions, and the course of the action necessarily determines the conduct of the agents. The danger of ambition is well described, and I know not whether it may not be said, in defence of some parts that now seem improbable, that, in Shakespeare's time, it was necessary to warn credulity against vain and delusive predictions."

Thomas Campbell the poet also remarks: "No drama in any national theatre, taking even that of Greece into account, has more wonderfully amalgamated the natural and the supernatural—or made the substances of truth more awful by their superstitious shadows—than has the tragedy of *Macbeth*. The progress of Macbeth in crime is an unparalleled lecture in ethical anatomy." [1] Hallam also adds: "The majority of readers, I believe, assign to *Macbeth* the pre-eminence among the works of Shakespeare: many, however, would rather name *Othello*, and a few might prefer *Lear* to either. The great epic drama, as the first may be called, deserves, in my own judg-

[1] Thomas Campbell, *Life of Mrs. Siddons.*

ment, the post it has attained, as being, in the language of Drake, 'the greatest effort of our author's genius, the most sublime and impressive drama which the world has ever beheld.'"[1]

The date of composition of *Macbeth* is 1606. Begun probably late in 1605, it was completed early the following year. The allusion to the happy union of the crowns of England and Scotland under James I. (IV. i. 120), "and some I see that two-fold balls and treble sceptres carry; horrible sight!" gives us the backward limit of date, viz., 1603, while the fact that Dr. Simon Forman, the astrologer and quack, records in his MS. Diary[2] that he witnessed a representation of the play in 1610, gives that as the forward limit of date. The old adage that the truth, in all likelihood, will lie midway between the two extremes, is exemplified here. Other items of evidence as to date, that may be cited, are that when James I. visited Oxford in 1605, he was addressed on entering the city, by three students of St. John's College, who alternately accosted his Majesty, reciting some Latin verses founded on a prediction of "the Weird Sisters" relative to Banquo and Macbeth; further, in Middleton's *Puritan*, occurs an obvious reference to Banquo's ghost, "Instead of a jester we'll have a ghost in a white sheet sit at the upper end of the table;" also in the edition of Warner's *Albion's England*, issued in 1606, the "Historie of Makbeth" is inserted; while finally, the reference in the Porter's soliloquy to the "equivocator that could swear in both the scales against either scale: who committed treason enough for God's sake, yet could not equivocate to heaven," was probably suggested by the defence offered of "the doctrine of equivocation" by the superior of the Jesuit Order, Henry Garnett, who was arraigned and executed early in 1606,

[1] Hallam, *Introduction to the Literature of Europe*, vol. iii. p. 310.

[2] Now among the Ashmolean MSS. in the Bodleian, the title being, *A Book of Plaies and Notes thereof for Common Pollicie.*

for the part he took in the Gunpowder Plot. The Porter's further reference to the "farmer that hanged himself on the expectation of plenty" may refer to the phenomenally good harvest of 1606.

Macbeth was not printed until it appeared in the Folio of 1623. It is by far the shortest of the tragedies (1993 lines), and is, moreover, the shortest of all Shakespeare's plays save the *Comedy of Errors* (1770 lines). In the Folio it is placed between *Julius Cæsar* and *Hamlet*. The text, however, is very corrupt, the printers probably having before them only a faulty and abbreviated acting version.

The scene of the play is laid in Scotland, almost all the action taking place near the camp at Forres; also at Macbeth's Castle at Inverness, later at "the Palace in Forres," thereafter at Macduff's Castle in Fife. The scene then shifts to England for the third scene of Act IV., to return in Act V. to Scotland and to Dunsinane, where the remainder of the events of the drama occur.

The Time-Analysis of the duration of the action as calculated by Mr. P. A. Daniel (*New Shakespeare Society's Transactions*, 1877-9) gives nine days represented on the stage, with intervals between, as follows—

Day I. embracing Act I. Sc. i.-iii.
,, II. ,, ,, I. ,, iv.-vii.
,, III. ,, ,, II. ,, i.-iv.; an Interval of about two weeks.
,, IV. embracing ,, III. ,, i.-v. [Act III. Sc. vi.—a term which cannot be defined].
,, V. embracing Act IV. Sc. i.
,, VI. ,, ,, IV. ,, ii.; an Interval for Ross's journey to England.
,, VII. embracing Act IV. Sc. iii.; V. i.; an Interval for Malcolm's return to Scotland.
,, VIII. embracing Act V. Sc. ii.-iii.
,, IX. ,, ,, V. ,, iv.-viii.

As regards the evidence towards date contributed by the metrical tests applied to the play, the following

results have been obtained: The total length of the piece is, as we have already seen, 1993 lines. Of these, 158 lines are in prose, and 1588 in blank verse, the verse being of that pregnant and thought-burdened type that is characteristic of Shakespeare's later and latest dramas. Of pentameter rhymes (rhymes of five measures) there are 118 in the play, and of rhymes in short lines 129, which give a rhyme-percentage of 5.8. Of feminine or double endings there is registered a percentage of 26.3, while of light and weak endings respectively, there are 21 and 2, again showing how rapidly Shakespeare is assuming his final manner. Then coming to enjambed or run-on lines, the percentage has risen to 36.6, the highest yet revealed in any of his plays, while the percentage in the speech-ending test has risen to 77.2. Doggerel has wholly disappeared, so have shallow puns, conceits, and wire-drawn wit-contests, while the habit of drawing into the context classical allusions of only a semi-relevant character has also been relinquished. The result of the testimony as a whole from the metrical tests confirms the verdicts of the historical and æsthetic criticism that *Macbeth* belongs to the close of the Third Period and exhibits a few tendencies of the Fourth Period.

As to the sources whence the drama is drawn, Shakespeare's obligations are chiefly due to Holinshed, where the story is given at length. For the scenes relating to "the Weird Sisters" and the doings of the supernatural beings generally, he would consult Reginald Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584), to which he had been indebted on previous occasions. We must note, however, with regard to both these authorities, that Shakespeare uses them in no spirit of slavish dependence. Holinshed's Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are different altogether from the highly complex, profoundly psychological, and supremely human characters which Shakespeare conceives in

working out the play. Then the Witches in Holinshed and Scot are very disagreeable and loathsome, but certainly not very terrific females. In Shakespeare they are awe-inspiring to the last degree.[1]

The plot in its main outlines, however, reproduces the course of so-called history. Macbeth is thrice hailed by the Witches as Thane of Glamis, Thane of Cawdor, and King of Scotland while on his way to welcome King Duncan to his castle. The two first prophecies are fulfilled almost immediately, and his temptation is whether or not by his own hand to hasten the fulfilment of the third. Egged on by his wife, he does so and murders Duncan. Then with amazing skill, Shakespeare shows what a train of other consequent crimes, one crime brings in its train. Never does he know an hour of happiness. He murders Banquo, and the spectre of his slaughtered friend actually ousts him from his seat at the banquet. Then Malcolm, the son of Duncan, and Macduff both flee to England to escape his impending slaughter of them. Lady Macbeth, who had been his strong support at all crises and emergencies, now fails him, prolonged insomnia at the long last sapping the forces of her mind. Malcolm and his adherents advance against him and invest his castle. He makes a spirited resistance and, at the end of all, dies as he desired, with his harness on his back.

Curiously enough, towards the close of the eighteenth century (1779) a MS. copy of a play called *The Witch*, by Thomas Middleton, was discovered by Mr. George Steevens, the Shakespearian scholar, in the collection of Mr. Thomas Pearson. To his surprise, he noted that the sorcery scenes in *The Witch* manifested similarity to the witch scenes in *Macbeth*. From an expression in the dedication of *The Witch* that it was written *long* before 1603, Steevens inferred that as *Macbeth* was not written until 1606, Shakespeare must

[1] T. A. Spalding, *Elizabethan Demonology*, chapters v.-viii.

have copied from Middleton. But any one who has had some little experience in the science of Shakespearian hermeneutics must see at a glance that it is Middleton who borrows from Shakespeare, not the latter from Middleton. The timidity of touch, the wavering portraiture, and most of all the looseness of language in *The Witch*, all stamp it as borrowed material. Internal evidence completely outweighs the feebly authenticated evidence which the Cambridge editors, following Steevens and Gifford, have adduced. To say that the Witches of *The Witch* were anterior to "the Weird Sisters" of *Macbeth* would be equivalent to saying that water could rise higher than its own initial level.[1]

Macbeth as a drama has aroused the admiration of great minds in all countries of Europe. For example, the erudite German critic, A. W. Schlegel, says of it: "Who could exhaust the praise of this sublime work? Since the *Furies* of Æschylus, nothing so grand and terrible has ever been composed. The Witches are not, it is true, divine Eumenides, and are not intended to be so; they are ignoble and vulgar instruments of hell. Shakespeare wished to show that the conflict of good and evil in this world can only take place by the permission of Providence, which converts the curse which individual mortals draw down on their heads into a blessing to others."

Coleridge states: "*Macbeth* stands in contrast throughout with *Hamlet:* in the manner of opening more especially. In the latter, there is a gradual ascent from the simplest forms of conversation to the language of impassioned intellect, yet the intellect still remaining the seat of passion; in the former, the invocation is at once made to the imagination and the emotions connected therewith. Hence the movement throughout is the most rapid of all Shakespeare's

[1] *Cf.* Dyce in his edition of Middleton's *Works*, and Lamb in his *Specimens of the English Dramatic Poets.*

plays. There is a complete abstinence from puns and plays on words in the whole drama, also an entire absence of comedy, nay even of irony and philosophic contemplation in *Macbeth*, the play being wholly and purely tragic."[1] Also Kreyssig says: "As regards wealth of thought, *Macbeth* ranks far below *Hamlet*; it lacks the wide, free, historic perfection which in *Julius Cæsar* raises us above the horror of his tragic fall. It cannot be compared with *Othello* for completeness, depth of plot, or full rich illustration of character. But, in our opinion, it excels all that Shakespeare or any other poet has created, in the simple force of the harmonious, majestic current of its action, in the transparency of its plan, in the nervous power and bold sweep of its language, and in its prodigal wealth of poetical colouring."[2]

Dr. Stopford Brooke adds: "Malcolm's trial of Macduff's honesty by representing himself as a lustful, avaricious, virtueless prince, and asking if such a one is fit to govern, also the episode concerning the King's evil, are both equally needless and delaying. . . . These two parts of the play suggest that Shakespeare did originally write *Macbeth* at greater length, and then taking out all that delayed it, clasped the rest together into the concentrated rush of the drama as we possess it. *Macbeth*, therefore, is now the shortest of the plays, and swiftness, every one says, is now its main characteristic."[3]

Shakespeare in *Macbeth* imitates Æschylus and Marlowe, in the particular that he concentrates all his tragic force upon the delineation of the two leading *dramatis personæ*, leaving the others little more than outlines. Macbeth and his wife are characters that must be analysed side by side. They are like the

[1] Coleridge, *Shakespeare and Elizabethan Dramatists.*
[2] Kreyssig, *Vorlesungen über Shakespeare*, vol. ii. p. 346.
[3] Stopford Brooke, *On Ten Plays of Shakespeare*, p. 182.

obverse and reverse of the same coin.[1] For the greater part of their lives these two have lived honoured and respected by all, he the great captain and bulwark of the throne, she the leading lady in the kingdom since the death of Duncan's Queen. Suddenly, at the bidding of the Witches he casts all away—health, happiness, honour, peace of mind—for a throne that rocks to its ruin from the very hour that he seated himself upon it. Lady Macbeth was of stronger stuff than her husband. She should have been the man, he the woman. Macbeth is too imaginative, is gifted with too strong a fancy ever to be a cold, calculating criminal, who would calmly and callously wade to his throne like an Eastern despot, through the blood of all his murdered brethren. Macbeth can plan, but he cannot close his eyes to consequences.[2] He sees his past crimes visualising themselves in the blood-stained ghosts of those he has killed. Prior to Duncan's murder he sees a dagger in the air before him, and after all is over he imagines voices cry, "Sleep no more, Macbeth doth murder sleep," and he cannot go back to view the scene of his crime—an act his strong-nerved wife has to do in his stead. His imagination re-creates the awful past, and hell for him has begun. On the other hand, his wife, at this crucial period, never shows the tremor of a muscle. Through all these desperate deeds and experiences she goes with the tense stoicism of a Christian martyr, determined to let no sign of flinching escape her. She even has spare resolution left to support her husband when, in the agony of his remorse and spiritual horror, he is becoming a coward, and she stimulates him to show a better and a bolder front to eyes that are already suspicious. Yet she it is who breaks down first. Why

[1] "On Character Development in Shakespeare as illustrated by 'Macbeth,'" by Prof. R. G. Moulton—*Transactions New Shakespeare Society*, 1880-6.

[2] Cf. Hörn, *Shakespeare's Schauspiele erläutert*, i. 49.

so? For this reason, that Macbeth has become familiarised with horrors, and his spiritual vision into the realms of the Unseen therefore loses its acuteness. She, on the other hand, has never become familiarised with the scenes of horror and of blood; she has suffered all along more than her husband, but with a woman's sublime self-sacrifice she gives neither word nor sign of her anguish, and even forced herself to do what to her exquisitely artistic and æsthetic nature was torture unspeakable, viz., to go back with the daggers into the death-chamber, and face the gashed and gory corpse of the murdered Duncan. Therefore when Macbeth's spirit is recovering its tone, when he is facing the combination against him with dauntless resolution and courage, all the ghosts and spirits from the vasty deep driven out of his mind by the advent of stern practical need, that awful introspective faculty in Lady Macbeth's mind, ten times more terrible in its effects than the visualisation of his crimes which assailed her husband, is eating into the assumed stoicism of her sensitive soul, until her reason totters on its throne through sheer excess of horror. The death of Macbeth fighting bravely to the end with his harness on his back, is Elysium compared with the Gehenna fires of unnamed dread, amid which Lady Macbeth passes into the Silence. The deaths of these two great personages reach the highest plane of tragic terror achieved in the literature of the world. Macbeth went through his torture while the body was in full strength and while vitality was at its fullest, while his wife also, despite the drain upon her mental and moral resources to achieve it, stood behind him stable as a rock, to buttress up his failing courage: Lady Macbeth, on the other hand, passed through hers when soul and body were alike exhausted by the task of strengthening him. She had been the stronger spirit, but when her day of trouble came, when the unimagined and unimaginable horrors of the guilty

soul fell upon her, she had no reserve force of stoicism wherewith to steel her sensibilities, and the remorse fires of hell literally burned her reason away.

Professor Bradley remarks: "These two characters, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, are fired by one and the same passion of ambition; and to a considerable extent they are alike. The disposition of each is high, proud, and commanding. They are born to rule if not to reign. They are peremptory or contemptuous to their inferiors. They are not children of light, like Brutus and Hamlet; they are of the world. We observe in them no love of country, and no interest in the welfare of any one outside their family. Their habitual thoughts and aims are, and, we imagine, long have been, all of station and power. And though in both, there is something, and in one much, of what is higher, honour, conscience, humanity, they do not live consciously in the light of these things or speak their language. Not that they are egoists, like Iago; or, if they are, theirs is an *egoïsme à deux*. They have no separate ambitions. They support and love one another. They suffer apart. And if, as time goes on, they drift a little apart, they are not vulgar souls, to be alienated and recriminate when they experience the fruitlessness of their ambition. They remain to the end tragic, even grand."

Hazlitt says: "Macbeth appears driven along by the violence of his fate like a vessel drifting before a storm; he reels to and fro like a drunken man; he staggers under the weight of his own purposes and the suggestions of others; he stands at bay with his situation; and from the superstitious awe and breathless suspense into which the communications of the Weird Sisters throw him, is hurried on with daring impatience, to verify their predictions, and with impious and bloody hand to tear aside the veil which hides the uncertainty of the future. He is not equal to the struggle with fate and conscience. . . . His energy springs

from the anxiety and agitation of his mind. His blindly rushing forward on the objects of his ambition and revenge, or his recoiling from them, equally betrays the harassed state of his feelings. This part of his character is admirably set off by being brought into connection with that of Lady Macbeth, whose obdurate strength of will and masculine firmness give her the ascendancy over her husband's faltering virtue. She at once seizes on the opportunity that offers for the accomplishment of all their wished-for greatness, and never flinches from her object till all is over. The magnitude of her resolution almost covers the magnitude of her guilt. She is a great bad woman whom we hate, but whom we fear more than we hate. She does not excite our loathing and abhorrence like Regan and Goneril. She is only wicked in order to gain a great end." [1]

Professor Lounsbury in *Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist* (p. 415) says: "Lady Macbeth's nature, far finer and higher strung than his, though at the beginning more resolute, pays at last in remorseful days and sleepless nights the full penalty of violated law. While Macbeth grows stronger as a man by the very course which destroys his susceptibility to moral considerations, this very susceptibility on her part increases with the success of the deed she has prompted, and in which she has taken determined part. The woman could not unsex herself wholly, and succumbs at last to the long-continued and increasing strain of a burden she was not fitted to bear."

Ulrici also remarks: "The real criminal, who, as his actions show, has no will but for his own interest, is by his very nature solitary. Consequently Macbeth and his wife stand alone on one side, while on the other are collected together against him the nobles of his kingdom, the whole State and people; and all the human race, in short. Accordingly, the moral of

[1] Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays.*

the action lies partly in this unavoidable and gradually deepening estrangement of the guilty one from God and all his fellows, and partly, in the fearful rapidity with which the criminality of Macbeth swells and grows up, from moment to moment, by an intrinsic necessity, until it reaches its inevitable goal of retribution and death." [1]

Of the other characters, they are but shadows compared with the terrible vitality of the two Macbeths. Duncan is every inch a king—noble, dignified, and royal alike in feeling and in deed. To have murdered such a monarch is therefore the " double damnation." Though the historic Duncan, like the historic Banquo, was a man given to vice and tyrannical practices, Shakespeare has deviated from his authorities and has drawn, both in Duncan's case and Banquo's, men who are of every good quality compact. Duncan shines pre-eminent in calm administrative wisdom and political prescience: Banquo is both a brave warrior and a faithful friend. Despite the fact that his mind is by no means clear as to Macbeth's innocence as regards Duncan's murder, Banquo was prepared to give him all loyal support and assistance in the administration of the affairs of the realm. Macbeth, however, could not forget that although he himself, according to the prediction of the Weird Sisters, was to be King, the descendants of Banquo were thereafter to hold the throne, that contingency implying that Macbeth's family would be either extinct or deposed from power. To make assurance sure, he plotted the slaughter of Banquo and Fleance, his " murderers " succeeding in the former case, but failing in the latter, and thus rendering nugatory all his efforts.

Macduff is also a loyal, noble-hearted man, one that ever turned a stern frown upon wrong-doing of every kind and degree. He was therefore prepared to risk, nay to sacrifice life itself, to seat upon the throne of

[1] Ulrici, *Shakespeare's Dramatic Art*, p. 206.

Scotland a king who would be a man worthy of respect. After carefully testing Malcolm, even as the latter tests him, Macduff attaches himself to him as by hooks of steel. Of him Ulrici writes: "The wife and children of Macduff suffer for the selfishness of their natural protector, who, forgetful of his duty as a husband and a father, has left them to secure his own personal safety. Accordingly he is punished by the loss of all his little ones, while the fate that falls on his wife is not altogether unmerited by the asperity with which she rails at her husband for his desertion of her."

Malcolm is a type of the ruler who, without being endowed with great administrative genius, possesses a gift even more valuable, viz., a soul permeated by ethical purity, honesty, and truth. Clad in these as with a garment, he fights onward and upward for his heritage, which the usurper has taken from him, not because he is ambitious to rule for ruling's sake, but because that heritage was the sphere to which God had called him, and for which he was responsible. Of Malcolm, Ulrici says: "Good requires time and patience; the virtuous deed demands for its fulfilment much of forethought, mature preparation, and calm collectedness of mind. As if designing to call attention to this important truth, Shakespeare has placed Malcolm's lingering and thoughtful deliberation, in direct contrast to the stormy and impetuous activity of Macbeth. . . . Beautifully has he painted these two forms of historical action. On the one hand the hasty deed following close on the heels of resolve, and like a hostile inroad securing its end by desolation and dismay: on the other a deliberation which anticipates and weighs all possible contingencies, from which the breaking of the boughs in Birnam Wood derives a motive and ceases to appear purely accidental."

With regard to the ghostly appearances in the play, that which has been accepted in *Hamlet* cannot be objected to in *Macbeth*. The appearance, as it has

reference to Macbeth, is visible to him only, because the precise effects desired to be produced were sought to be evoked for his influence and for that of no other. On this point H. T. Rötscher says: "The appearance of Banquo's ghost is the direct result of Macbeth's state of mind; the ghost is therefore visible only to him. Everything around and about Macbeth is for Macbeth as though it were not; the instant that Banquo's ghost rises he is completely transported out of himself and is engrossed solely with the creatures of his brain." [1]

The Weird Sisters are terrific creations.[2] From the moment they enter until that wherein they disappear, they dominate the stage. Attention to aught else is impossible. It is by this sheer attribute of terror that they produce upon us an impression so profound. There is only one other scene in the literature of the world which raises sentiments of equal horror, and that is the raising of the "Witch of Endor." In both cases it is the simplicity and the intensity of the situation that arouse our feelings. We are face to face with the elemental forces of nature—dark, deadly, inscrutable. He who can read unmoved those awful scenes is unemotional indeed! The whole atmosphere of the play is like a district over which broods a heavy thunder-cloud, dark with the menaces of insulted and unexpiated moral law. By ambition fell the angels, and by ambition fell Macbeth and his wife, an ambition as false in its aim as it was fell in its effects, an ambition, in fine, which sought to trample upon ethical and political justice, and to proclaim the commencement of the era of the strongest. Macbeth fell because he forgot that his chain whereby he clung to power and to the people was no stronger than its weakest link, and its weakest link lay in the fact that

[1] *Die Kunst der dramatischen Darstellung*, p. 319.

[2] "The Number of Witches in 'Macbeth,'" by Dr. B. Nicholson—*Transactions New Shakespeare Society*, 1880-2.

he was a usurper as well as a murderer, and a usurper's doom is swift.

SECTION 7.—KING LEAR. 1606

King Lear, the next play to which our attention must be directed, is by many critics esteemed Shakespeare's most stupendous effort of genius. *Macbeth* was the drama illustrative of the consequences of unholy ambition, and may further be described as the one wherein the emotion of terror stands out in marked prominence: *King Lear* is the one which marks with startling emphasis the penalties that follow unwarrantable abnegation of responsibility, and may be further defined as the piece in which the feeling of infinite compassion is the predominating affection of the mind.

King Lear, as a play, has generally been more admired than loved, owing to the painful tension to which the emotions are subjected throughout. On this point Coleridge says: "In this tragedy, the story or fable constrained Shakespeare to introduce wickedness in an outrageous form in the person of Regan and Goneril. He, however, had read nature too heedfully not to know that courage, intellect, and strength of character are the most impressive forms of power, and that to power in itself, without reference to any moral end, an inevitable admiration and complacency appertains, whether it is displayed in the conquests of a Buonaparte or a Tamerlane, or in the form and thunder of a cataract. But in the exhibition of such a character it was of the highest importance to prevent the guilt from passing into utter monstrosity, which again depends on the presence or absence of causes and temptations sufficient to account for the wickedness, without the necessity of recurring to a thorough fiendishness of nature for its origination."

Of the play as distinct from the characters, Hazlitt

says: "We wish that we could pass this play over, and say nothing about it. All that we can say must fall far short of the subject, or even of what we ourselves conceive of it. To attempt to give a description of the play itself or of its effect on the mind, is mere impertinence, yet we must say something. It is then the best of all Shakespeare's plays, for it is the one in which he was the most in earnest. He was here fairly caught in the web of his own imagination. The passion which he has taken as his subject is that which strikes its root deepest into the human heart, of which the bond is the hardest to be unloosed, and the cancelling and tearing to pieces of which gives the greatest revulsion to the frame. The mind of Lear, staggering between the weight of attachment and the hurried movement of passion, is like a tall ship driven about by the winds, buffeted by the furious waves, but that still rides above the storm, having its anchor fixed in the bottom of the sea, or it is like the sharp rock circled by the eddying whirlpool that foams and beats against it, or like the solid promontory pushed from its basis by the force of an earthquake." [1]

The date of the composition of *King Lear* has been assigned with tolerable unanimity to a period immediately before or else immediately after *Macbeth*. Some strong arguments can be cited on both alternatives—arguments drawn equally from external as from internal evidence. True, as has been pointed out, we have one limit fixed by external evidence and another by internal, but the difference between the two consists merely of three years—from 1603 to 1606. After a careful sifting of all the evidence bearing on the question of the date of *King Lear*, I feel that the results of criticism are decidedly better vindicated by the later than the earlier date. An entry occurs in the Stationers' Register dated 26th November 1607, which states that "the Historye of Kinge Lear, as it

[1] Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*.

was played before the Kinge's Majestie at Whitehall upon St. Stephen's Night at Christmas last is about to be issued." "St. Stephen's Night," of course, corresponded to the 26th December 1606. Then Harsnett's *Declaration of Popish Impostures*, to which Shakespeare was indebted for many of the designations of Edgar's devils — "Flibbertigibbet," "Smulkin," "Modo," "Mahu," "Frateretto" (III. iv. 189)—was published late in 1603. Further, the allusions to "the late eclipses" (I. ii. 112, 148-153) refer to the eclipse of the sun which took place in October 1605; and the change in the nursery rhyme from the old tale of *Jack the Giant Killer*, "Fee, Foh and Fum, I smell the blood of a *British* man," in place of "*an Englishman*," is a reference to the proclamation made in October 1604 of the Union of the two Crowns; while there is also a reference in the same scene to the Gunpowder Plot. All these facts therefore lead one to the conclusion that the date of composition must be assigned to the year 1606.

As to the publication of the play, the first edition of *King Lear* in Quarto (Q1) was printed in 1608, the title page being as follows: *M. William Shakspeare* | *His* | *True Chronicle Historie of the Life and* | *Death of King Lear and* | *his three* | *Daughters* | *with the unfortunate life of Edgar, sonne* | *and heire to the Earle of Gloster, and his* | *sullen and assumed humor of* | *Tom of Bedlam* | *As it was played before the King's Majestie at Whitehall upon* | *St. Stephan's night in Christmas Hollidayes* | *By his Majesties Seruants playing usually at the Gloabe* | *on the Bancke-side* | LONDON | *Printed for Nathaniel Butter, and are to be sold at his shop in Paul's* | *Churchyard at the signe of the Pide Bull neere* | *St. Austin's Gate* 1608.

The device which stands below the title is similar to the one used by Wechelum, the Frankfort printers.

That same year, 1608, a Second Quarto (Q2) made its appearance, the device being different, while the

place of sale was omitted. Q1 is very poorly read, and Q2, while correcting some of the errors of its predecessor, commits several others of its own. A Third Quarto (Q3) appeared in 1655.

The Folio of 1623 is evidently printed from a source independent of the Quartos. There are a great number of variations, alike in word and phrase, and each version omits certain passages which the other retains. The explanation, according to Delius, is that the omissions in the Quartos are printers' blunders; those in the Folio the omissions of the actors. The theory has much to be said for it.

The scene of the action is in Britain, at the King's Palace, and at the Castles of the Duke of Albany, the Earl of Gloucester, and at the British Camp near Dover. The Time-Analysis gives the duration of the action of the drama as covering ten days, these being arranged by Mr. P. A. Daniel (*Transactions New Shakespeare Society*, 1877-9) as follows—

Day	I.	embracing Act	I.	Sc.	
,,	II.	,, ,,	I.	,,	ii.; an interval of about a fortnight or less.
,,	III.	embracing Act	I.	Sc.	iii.-iv.
,,	IV.	,, ,,	II.	,,	i.-ii.
,,	V.	,, ,,	II.	,,	iii.-iv.; III. i.-vi.
,,	VI.	,, ,,	III.	,,	vii.; IV. i.
,,	VII.	,, ,,	IV.	,,	ii.; perhaps an interval of a day or two.
,,	VIII.	embracing Act	IV.	,,	iii.
,,	IX.	,, ,,	IV.	,,	iv.-vi.
,,	X.	,, ,,	IV.	,,	vii.; V. i.-iii.

Then as regards the metrical tests in the evidence they afford as to date, the following results are interesting. Out of the total length of the play, 3298 lines, only 903 are in prose, and 2238 in the terse, pithy, pregnant, and thought-packed verse of Shakespeare's later and latest periods. Prose, which was the principal feature of his Second Period, now becomes a subordinate element, its place being taken by that

marvellously compact verse whereof we have no analogue in Elizabethan literature, though an approach is made to it in the poetry of Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, and of Donne.[1] Of pentameter rhymes there are only 74 examples, and rhyme altogether only represents an element in the play of 3.4 per cent., showing a steady decrease. Of feminine or double endings we have a percentage of 28.5, and of light and weak endings, five of the former and one of the latter respectively. Coming next to enjambed or run-on lines, we discover that they have increased in frequency to a percentage of 29.3, while end-stopped lines show a conspicuous decrease. The thought-laden style can no longer endure the strait-jacket repression of end-stopping, and in all the great passages a thought is developed through three, four, six, and even eight lines. The speech-ending test also gives very notable results. I cannot get my results to come near König's; he making this test only return a percentage of 60.9. Now my enumeration makes it 69.3, while Dr. Bradley also arrives at an almost similar result, viz., 69.0. I therefore give both calculations, because we are so indebted to König for the work he has done, and he is usually so marvellously correct, that one feels dubious about differing from him. All the features of his early style have now been dropped by Shakespeare, and in *Lear* we have neither doggerel verse nor wretched puns, neither far-fetched conceits nor wire-drawn wit and mythologic imagery. In fact the results as a whole given by the tests would place *King Lear* exactly where the historical evidence and æsthetic criticism has located it, towards the close of the Third Period, and rather after than before *Macbeth*. *Lear* is the tragedy of stupendous interests. We see the mills of God grinding slowly but surely the destinies of humanity. The sight of the aged Lear literally racked to death by reiterated turns of the torture-

[1] *Cf.* Gosse, *Seventeenth Century Literature.*

machine of filial ingratitude, is almost too agonising for average human sensibilities. Realising as we do that peace on earth for him there now can be none, we long for the time when life's fitful fever will be over and the rest of death will have come to him.[1]

The date when King Lear is supposed to have reigned in Britain was at a time contemporaneous with the epoch of Joash in Judah, otherwise 878-839 B.C. He is of course, as regards that date, a character entirely mythical. But to the Elizabethans it was "undisputed history," and the legend when first told in Geoffrey of Monmouth, had been recorded by successive annalists and chroniclers from Layamon's *Brut* (1200) to Holinshed's *Chronicle History of England and Scotland* (1577). It appeared in such collections as the *Gesta Romanorum*, Higgins's *Mirror for Magistrates*, Warner's *Albion's England*, and the ballad of "Kynge Leir and his Three Daughters." Spenser also referred to it in the *Faerie Queen* (bk. ii. c. x. 27-32), all such references showing the popularity of the story. At length, in 1592-3, the legend was dramatised by a writer whose name is lost, under the title *The Chronicle Historie of King Leir and his Three Daughters*. Though entered for printing on the Stationers' Register, 1594, it was not issued until the end of 1605, when the report had evidently been circulated, that the great Shakespeare was engaged on a play on the same theme. Probably Shakespeare consulted all these authorities when preparing the colossal drama. Hints of indebtedness to them all peep out from time to time from the texture of the play.[2]

The plot is designed to show that the compensations of love are not in life but in death, because death is the portal of the truer life. *Macbeth*, as we have already seen, was the drama of terror, *Lear* that of

[1] *Cf.* Lamb's *Essays* (Dents' edition), vol. iii. p. 15.
[2] A. W. Schlegel, *Lectures on Dramatic Art*, vol. ii. p. 204.

compassion, the two passions running through the respective plays like threads of living fire.

Lear, the King of Britain, announces his intention of abdicating the cares of sovereignty and of dividing his kingdom into three, a third part to each of his three daughters, Regan, Goneril, and Cordelia. As, however, Cordelia does not possess the glib tongue and the false heart of her two sisters, she is esteemed to be wanting in natural affection, and is disinherited by her rashly impulsive father, despite the protests of the one honest man at his Court, the Earl of Kent. She is, however, claimed by the King of France as his wife without dowry. Goneril, the eldest born, is married to the Duke of Albany; Regan, the second, to the Duke of Cornwall, and the undertaking is that they shall maintain him and his men in honour and comfort. Gradually, however, the two sisters, acting in concert, reduce the train of the late King, until of all his retinue only his fool remains, and he himself is left homeless.

Meantime, Edmund, the bastard son of the Earl of Gloster, has so poisoned his father's mind against his legitimate son Edgar, that the latter is turned out of doors, and to protect himself from death has been compelled to assume the disguise of Tom o' Bedlam, an imbecile. Edmund is the Richard III. and the Iago of this piece in one, but he is even more deadly than either. They were superstitious; Edmund cares nothing for any one or anything in heaven, earth, or hell. He runs his destroying course throughout the play, rejoicing if he can turn men and women against each other. He causes the Duke of Cornwall to put out the eyes of his (Edmund's) father so as to secure the family honours and estates for the bastard; he makes love to each of the sisters, Regan and Goneril, until in a fury of jealousy they kill each other for his sake. Then Cordelia, hearing of the vile treatment meted out to her father by her two sisters, lands in England from France with an army to reinstate him

in his rights. But mainly by Edmund's exertions, who; despite his villainy, is as daring in courage as he is despicable in conduct, Cordelia's army is defeated, and she, Lear, and all their friends fall into the hands of Edmund and his associates.

The mills of God, however, have now caught him between the upper and the nether stones of retribution, and he is killed in single combat by his brother Edgar.[1]

Ere he dies he tries to do one good act—to save Lear and Cordelia, whom he had ordered to be executed. But his cancellation of the order came too late as far as the latter is concerned. She had been strangled in prison, though the aged Lear immediately killed the slave that did it, and the nadir deep of tragic suffering is reached when the old man staggers on to the stage with the body of Cordelia in his arms, to die a few minutes later by her side. Thus ends this play of the martyrdom of man when duty's dictates have been left unanswered, and when responsibilities, that can only end with life, have been neglected.

As regards the characters, the whole stage is dominated by the colossal personality of Lear. If, at first, he is merely a querulous, self-opinionated, domineering old man, prepared to support his attendants in all their insolence and riot, very soon our opinion of him changes. The ingratitude and cruelty of Goneril, Regan, Cornwall, and Edmund literally shatter his self-respect. He becomes a synonym for acute, soul-searing sorrow, a man and a monarch, majestic in misery, terrible in the range and record of his woe. Lear counted on his children's affection as a sure possession. Awed by the reverence surrounding a king, they gave him dutiful regard and respect which he mistook for love. With the frothy testifications of expediency by Goneril and Regan he allows himself to

[1] Kreyssig, *Shakespeare Fragen*, also *Vorlesungen uber Shakespeare*, vol. II. pp. 316-318.

be gulled, and when the deep, enduring love of Cordelia, that has no lips but its own acts to witness of its loyalty, cannot mouth out platitudes of deathless devotion and the like, he drives her away, despite the faithful Kent's remonstrances, and gives her portion to her false sisters. To Lear, the aching sense of disappointment is tenfold more poignant than the physical misery he endures of exposure to the fury of the weather. His initial sin was the failure to realise that sovereignty is a moral duty that cannot be donned and doffed like a garment. As in marriage so in monarchy, only death can divide the relation of the two parties without deadly sin being committed. The deadly sin had been committed in surrendering the responsibilities of kingship before the hand of death had given to him his legal discharge. From that initial sin all the others were evolved, because if he had not given Goneril and Regan control over him, they had not dared to lift a finger against him. Again, many German critics have said, Why did not Shakespeare redress the balance in the end by allowing Cordelia to be victorious in her attempt to right her father's wrongs? But Shakespeare's sense of British patriotism would then be up in arms. Cordelia's victory would have meant the French monarch becoming King of England. Besides, Shakespeare would take higher ground than that! Is virtue always triumphant in this world? Do the compensations of rectitude always attend us in this life? Is the better cause in every case victorious, and do not the stars in their courses sometimes fight for in place of against Sisera? Again we must revert to the simile of the "Mills of God." We, in our brief glimpse of existence, see only one movement of the terrible stones, and too often to us they seem to catch the righteous and not the wrong-doing in their awful grip. But if our watch were prolonged until the vast sweep of God's providence were complete, whereof we had only seen the

veriest arc of the mighty circle, we should realise that the justice of God is even-handed, and that the law of compensation holds throughout the economy of the universe.

The drama of *Lear* is the tragedy of senility that has not realised its own loss of intellectual supremacy. Than this no tragedy can be more terrible. To Lear life is an uncompleted circle because he cannot realise that for him his day of power is done. Hence his bitter cry, "I am mightily abused: I should even die with pity to see another thus;" and when he has realised that his last interest in life, Cordelia, has been reft from him, he sums up all in the bitter exclamation, "And my poor fool is hanged! No, no, no life"—then turning to the body of Cordelia he adds—

> "Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life,
> And thou no breath at all? Thou'lt come no more,
> Never, never, never, never, never!"

and so he too passes within the Silence to learn the mystery of the compensations that lie beyond the grave.

Of the character of Lear, Charles Lamb says: "The greatness of Lear is not in corporal dimension, but in intellectual; the explosions of his passion are terrible as a volcano; they are storms turning up and disclosing to the bottom that sea, his mind, with all its vast riches. It is his mind that is laid bare. This case of flesh and blood seems too insignificant to be thought on, even as he himself neglects it. On the stage we see nothing but corporal infirmities and weakness, the impotence of rage. While we read it, we see, not Lear, but we are Lear—we are in his mind, we are sustained by a grandeur which baffles the malice of daughters and storms; in the alienations of his reason we discover a mighty irregular power of reasoning, unmethodised from the ordinary purposes of life, but exerting its powers as the wind blows where it listeth at will upon the corruptions and abuses of mankind."

And Hazlitt adds regarding the character: "The character of Lear himself is very finely conceived. It is the only ground on which such a story could be built with the greatest truth and effect. It is his rash haste, his violent impetuosity, his blindness to everything but the dictates of his passions and affections that produces all his misfortunes, that aggravates his impatience of them, that enforces our pity for him. . . . That which aggravates the sense of sympathy in the reader, and of uncontrollable anguish in the swollen heart of Lear, is the petrifying indifference, the cold, calculating, obdurate selfishness of his daughters. His keen passions seem whetted on their stony hearts. The contrast would be too painful, the shock too great, but for the intervention of the Fool, whose well-timed levity comes in to break the continuity of feeling when it can no longer be borne, and to bring into play again the fibres of the heart just as they are growing rigid from overstrained excitement."

Hallam remarks: "Lear himself is perhaps the most wonderful of dramatic conceptions, ideal to satisfy the most romantic imagination, yet idealised from the reality of nature. Shakespeare in preparing us for the most intense sympathy with this old man, first abases him to the ground; it is not Œdipus against whose respected age the gods themselves have conspired; it is not Orestes, noble-minded and affectionate, whose crime has been virtue: it is a headstrong, feeble, and selfish being, whom in the first act of the tragedy nothing seems capable of redeeming in our eyes—nothing but what follows, intense woe, unnatural wrong."[1]

The German critic Franz Horn then remarks: "Lear in his agony preserves his sense of justice perfectly. It is only what his daughters have done to him which afflicts him, not the elements that rage against his grey hairs: 'I blame you not,' he says,

[1] Hallam, *Introduction to the Literature of Europe.*

'I never gave *you* kingdoms.' It is only pure sympathy which Nature manifests in her wild uproar. She alone stands by him when nearly all human sympathy fails him. . . . Even the madness which comes over the old man is to be considered in a sense as the sympathy of Nature, and it is not wholly without solace, as it not only does not overcome, but rather exalts Lear's sense of royalty. 'Ay, every inch a King.' With this feeling he still wears the crown lent invisibly." [1]

Then Ulrici sums up the matter: "In consequence of his confounding filial piety with free filial love, Lear not merely demands the love of his children as his due right, but also demands its outward confirmation in word and deed, corresponding with the way and manner in which his own love manifests itself." [2]

Than Goneril and Regan there is no more terrible pair of ungrateful children in the literature of the world. They are monsters not women, Gorgons of unfilial conduct, Goneril perhaps the worse of the two, because she was the first to ill-treat her father, and also because she is a masculine woman, full of purposes and intrigues of her own, while Regan seems more womanly, more disposed to follow the lead of Goneril, more passive, and more dependent. Once evil has entered into their nature, however, they become vile indeed, forgetting their marriage vows, in addition to their filial duties, and ready to murder their husbands as well as each other for the love of the bastard Edmund. Standing at first in unholy alliance to break down the will of their father, no sooner had that been accomplished than they fly off, each at her own special tangent of wickedness, to taint her immediate circle with all that is vile and vicious. To them also in the end of the day, the mills of God bring home the grinding of retribution, when, degraded and disgraced

[1] Hörn, *Shakespeare's Schauspiele erläutert*, vol. i. p. 185.
[2] Ulrici, *Shakespeare's Dramatic Art*.

by the realisation that every one knows of their sin and despises them for it, they perish miserably, each by the hand of the other.

Of them Gervinus says: " At first sight no difference is discernible between the two sisters (' As like as a crab is to a crab,' says the Fool): but upon a closer view, it is surprising what a clearly defined contrast there is between them. The elder, Goneril, with the wolfish visage and the dark frontlet of ill-humour, is a masculine woman, while Regan seems more womanly. Goneril always appears the prime mover, and Regan her echo. Goneril it is who subsequently puts restraints on the King and is the first to treat him with disrespect, while Regan shows some lingering awe of him. . . . Yet the latter says in her simple way far ruder things to her father than her sister does, and yet Lear hesitates to pronounce his curse on her as he does upon Goneril. . . . In every respect Regan is of a more constrained nature than her sister, whose ' woman's will is of undistinguished space.' "

Horn on this subject says: " It would be an interesting subject for a prize essay which of the two is the worse, Regan or Goneril. I confess I am not able to answer the question satisfactorily. I believe Shakespeare meant to leave it an open question."

Against these hateful, harpy-like figures, look now at the angelic picture of Cordelia, one of the noblest, truest, most self-sacrificing women Shakespeare ever painted. Not that she is perfect. Far from it! Shakespeare was too true a craftsman to commit that mistake. She has inherited somewhat of her father's hasty temperament, of his pride and self-will. Disgusted at the deceit and dissimulation of her sisters in the opening scene, she flies to the other extreme, and persists in it even after Lear has stooped to entreat her to alter her language. But her lesson of acquiring self-control in speech and behaviour is quickly learned, and when she returns to reinstate her

father, she is as near as it is possible for humanity to be "a perfect woman nobly planned." She it is who, out of the plenitude of her lately acquired patience, teaches her father the lesson of sober self-restraint. In those few days of calm, quiet happiness in the French camp, the society of his "only" daughter soothes the tortured brain into quiescence. If reason cannot regain its throne, the mind acquires for the time being a quiet restfulness, while father and daughter rejoice in their communion of soul and community of sentiment, until the battle-day arrives which separates them for ever. Cordelia is one of the most exquisitely sweet of all Shakespeare's women. Her gentleness is her glory, yet it is the gentleness of true heroism, not that of weakness. She is willing and ready to die for her father's cause, and despite his cruelty towards her personally, she cannot desert him. Then does Lear realise who is "the true daughter of his old age."

Of her Ulrici says: "She is at once greater in her love and elevation of soul than Electra, grander for her martyr-like patience amid suffering than Antigone." Mrs. Jameson also says: "There is in the beauty of Cordelia's character an effect too sacred for words and almost too deep for tears. Within her heart is a fathomless well of purest affection, but its waters sleep in silence and obscurity—never failing in their depth, but never overflowing in their fulness. Everything in her seems to lie beyond our view, and affects us in a manner which we feel rather than perceive." And Oechelhaüser, the great German critic, adds: "An angelic loveliness is the atmosphere in which Cordelia has her being. How nobly does she atone for her fault: with what fulness of love and tenderness does she try to call back her aged father to life and mental soundness!" Finally, Dowden says: "Cordelia has strengthened the bonds of humanity; she has enriched the tradition of human goodness." It

is better for each of us to breathe because she has been a woman."

As regards Cornwall, the husband of Regan, he is a man of an essentially bad, traitorous nature, brutal in instincts, and absolutely pitiless towards those who differ from him. The political chance that places power in his hands virtually creates a tyrant, for Cornwall considers his position as only a means to an end—that end being self-aggrandisement. He is a coward as well as a traitor, and only assails those weaker than himself. He meets his deserts, however, by being slaughtered by one of Gloster's servants, after he has wantonly and cruelly destroyed the Earl's eyesight. Albany, on the other hand, the husband of Goneril, is a weak man, overborne towards evil by the masculine inclination of his wife. He breaks away from her influence towards the end, however, and, when he discovers the *liaison* between Edmund and his wife, he repudiates her, and brings forward Edgar, Gloster's legitimate son, to combat with and to conquer Edmund the bastard.

As Gervinus points out, it is not by accident that Shakespeare has slipped into portraying "those barbarities of the Duke of Cornwall, a second instance of which is not to be found in the other dramas of the poet. It was intentionally also that he depicted such full bursts of passion in Lear. The reason is to be found in the play—'Men are as the time is,' said Edmund," and as the age of Lear was one of volcanic passion and unrestrained vehemence of sentiment, to be true to life the characters had to be cast in that particular mould.

The Earl of Gloster is also a man of weak, uncertain nature, who at first seems to side with Goneril and Regan, but eventually, influenced by pity and by rage at his own wrongs, he does all he can to thwart the schemes of the traitors. He has, however, made the great mistake of believing Edmund, his own

bastard son, in his allegations against Edgar, his rightful heir, that the latter is seeking to kill his father. He pays a bitter price for his folly. Edmund, hoping to obtain his father's honours, betrays the purposes of the latter to Cornwall, who puts out Gloster's eyes, his unnatural son Edmund consenting thereto. Gloster, however, in the end has the satisfaction, if not of seeing, at least of hearing that Nemesis has overtaken his enemies, and particularly his unnatural son. He is a weak man who at the outset would fain have run with the hare and hunted with the hounds, but has not ability enough to achieve that difficult task.

Edmund is, as we have seen, the evil genius of the piece, who delights in setting all the characters at variance. With many of the qualities both of Richard III. and of Iago in him, he entirely lacked their weaknesses. He is one of the most terrible figures in the whole range of Shakespearian drama—a man absolutely without natural affection as well as absolutely without fear, hardened in every form of evil, glorying in it, and dreading nothing that could come against him from above or from beneath. He dies as he has lived, daring and reckless to the end, seeking, by countermanding the order for the execution of Lear and Cordelia, to do one good deed before he died, not so much for the sake of doing good, but to checkmate the plans of the others. The stain on his birth had turned his blood to gall, and caused his hand to be against every other man's.[1]

We come now to Edgar, the noble-hearted Edgar, who, by the wicked arts of his traitorous brother and the folly of his father, has fallen so low as to be compelled to assume the character of "Tom o' Bedlam" to escape assassination. The very conception of such a swing of the social pendulum is marvellous. Equally marvellous is the rapid change of fortune which brings that very father, blind and a beggar, to be dependent,

[1] Coleridge, *Notes and Lectures*, p. 188, edition 1874.

not only for his food, but for his very power to move about, on the very son he would have slain. What strikes one most of all in this great play is Shakespeare's daring in effecting such extraordinary artistic *tours de force* as appear in the ups and downs in the fortunes of his characters. If it is to produce an effective situation he never hesitates to hurl a monarch to beggary or to promote a beggar to be a monarch. Truth is stranger than fiction, and life's deepest surprises come from the side of historic fact, not from that of fancy or of fiction.

Of Edgar, Gervinus says he is a " pure and innocent soul, so far from evil that he suspects none, stirred by no passionate blood, driven by no wild desire like all the rest. He has inherited his father's mildness, with a nature more calm and a mind more versatile. Suddenly surprised by ill-fortune, he rapidly resolves, with foresight, adroitness, and a skilful compliance with circumstances, to play the part of one of those Bedlam beggars, who, in wild attire and with a madness half feigned, were accustomed to wander over England. . . . He is in this age of obstinate and rude characters the versatile Odyssean spirit which is never lacking in such heroic times, at once a sufferer and a hero, brave and prudent in the dangers surrounding him. He grows greater at every step. To play such a character a man must be every inch an actor. Edgar and Cordelia are the two characters which relieve the terrific sombreness of the piece."

Finally, we have Kent and the Fool; the former, the impulsive, kind-hearted, faithful servant of his master, one who loves him so deeply that he cannot see him commit an act of tyranny so gross as the disinheriting of Cordelia, without protesting against it at the risk of life and rank. Then, though banished and cruelly wronged, his sole desire is to try to do his late lord and master service. Nay, when all is over, and when Lear at length, life's fitful fever over, sleeps in

peace, on Albany appealing to Kent and Edgar to assist him to rule in this realm and the "gored state sustain," the aged and faithful Kent replies—

> "I have a journey, sir, shortly to go,
> My master calls, and I must not say, No!"

Kent's fidelity was not bounded by life! As the Highlander follows the head of his clan, and the Red Indian the chief of his tribe, into the unknown mystery of the World of Spirits, so Kent feels he must not linger long in the world, lest the master he had loved so well in life, might have need of him in the Hereafter.

The Fool in *King Lear* is the greatest of all Shakespeare's fools and clowns. Touchstone may be more richly philosophic, Feste have a wider range of human sympathy, Launce be more humorous and Speed wittier, Costard possess a keener sense of the incongruities of life, the Clown in *A Winter's Tale* a readier perception of the comic side of his neighbours' idiosyncrasies, but for deep, penetrating, clear-sighted criticisms on the men, women, and things of the society around him, Lear's Fool is unsurpassed. He was as courageous as he was correct in his *obiter dicta* on life. He alone was the first to tell Lear of his sin and folly in laying down his power and dividing his kingdom. It had to be done skilfully, for Kent's blunt but blundering attempt had shown how it should not be done. The shrewd Fool, however, knew how to clothe his mockeries so skilfully and to produce them so opportunely, that although they are none the less cutting, their design is not so prominent, and the King takes them because they come from the Fool, who is bound to speak truth and to whom Lear is attached, even as the Fool with the most devoted love is attached to Lear.[1] It is his fidelity and his lovableness that gain the Fool our love, because we recognise that here, in the heart of this poor jester, a thing of motley and

[1] *Shakespeare's "King Lear,"* by Ernest Schick, p. 203.

of patches, is one of the mighty compensations which Lear is to receive when the mills of God have done their grinding—viz., the love that triumphed over death—" Greater love hath no man than this, that a man should give his life for his friend," and this the Fool did for Lear. " And my poor fool is hanged," cried the old man in his last speech ere death claimed him—hanged for love of his King and master!

Section 8.—Timon of Athens. 1607

The next drama to claim our attention is *Timon of Athens*, in which Shakespeare collaborated in all probability with George Wilkins. The latter was an innkeeper in the parish of St. Sepulchre's, as well as a dramatist and actor. His inn was probably, like the " Mermaid," a place of meeting for many poets, actors, dramatists, and literary men generally. To that hostelry in 1605, when Mary Mountjoy and Stephen Bellott left the paternal roof at the corner of Monkwell and Silver Street (where William Shakespeare was still living with the Mountjoys), they went and hired a room from George Wilkins, taking with them, as Professor Wallace has discovered by his researches in the Public Record Office, furniture to the value of about £5 in money of the period. At Wilkins's inn, Shakespeare certainly would visit them, and this may have been the reason why George Wilkins, comparatively speaking a third-rate writer, was promoted to the high honour of collaborating with the greatest dramatist of the day and of the world.

Wilkins, who was about thirty-six years of age at the time of the Bellott-Mountjoy case, was the author of the *Miseries of Enforced Marriage*, played at " The Globe " prior to the year 1607, and seems also to have done a good deal of hack work of a subordinate kind for the theatres. He would therefore be born about 1576 (or twelve years later than Shakespeare),

and would be about thirty when he collaborated with Shakespeare in *Timon of Athens* and *Pericles*.

The date of the composition of *Timon* cannot be given with any great certainty. That it belongs in manner, structure, and sentiment to the epoch of *Macbeth* and *Lear* is evident to even a cursory student of the play. Some critics have argued that, as it displays a decided falling off in tragic vigour, it should be put at the end of this period as the last of the tragedies. I am inclined, however, to think that *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus* were later in date than it. If we place the year of composition as 1607, I do not think we shall be far wrong.

Timon of Athens (says Professor Dowden), although deservedly one of the least popular of Shakespeare's plays, belongs to his best period, and was written by the poet with no half-hearted regard for the subject. *Timon of Athens* and *The Tempest* must in point of time be assigned a date near each other, although it is possible that a play or two or even three plays in the precise chronological order may be between them. They are placed near each other, because, in *Timon of Athens*, Shakespeare's mood of indignation with the world attains its highest, its ideal expression, while, in *The Tempest*, we find the ideal expression of the temper of mind which succeeded his mood of indignation—the pathetic yet august serenity of Shakespeare's final period!

The piece was not printed until the Folio of 1623, where it stands as the fourth of the Tragedies, being divided neither into acts nor scenes, and the text is exceedingly corrupt.

To indicate in a complete list all scenes and sections and speeches and lines which are of Shakespeare's composition, and those that are by Wilkins, would be a very difficult and I fear not altogether a satisfactory or profitable task. The following, however, are the principal sections which are clearly the work of

Wilkins: Act I. Sc. i. ll. 189-240, 258-273; II. i., ii. 45-121; III. all except vi. 98-115; IV. ii. 30-50, iii. 292-362, 399-414, 454-543; V. i. 1-59, ii.-iii.

The bulk of Timon's speeches, however, are Shakespeare's work, the share which Wilkins took in writing the play being, comparatively speaking, unimportant. Yet, as several competent critics have remarked, Wilkins was a highly capable playwright, and a facile, even at times a brilliant, writer. Two views have prevailed with regard to the piece as it stands. The first, which we may call "the English view," is that Shakespeare wrote the Timon parts, or Timon sketch, to which additions were subsequently made. The other view, or "the German view," advocated by Delius, is that the drama has a general coherence, and has been all written by Shakespeare. The English view has also been pretty widely accepted in Germany, thanks to the clear statement of the case by Tschischwitz, another acute and reliable Shakespearian scholar of the Fatherland.

The scene of the action of the play lies in Athens and in the woods around the Athenian capital. The time-analysis gives six days with an interval as the period of the dramatic action. These days are distributed throughout the play as follows—

Day	I. embracing Act	I. Sc.	i.-ii.
	II. ,, ,,	II. ,,	i.-ii.; III. i.-iii.
	III.	III.	iv.-vi.; IV. i.-ii.; Interval.
	IV.	IV.	iii.
	V.	V.	i.-ii.
	VI.	V.	iii.-iv.

As regards the historic period described in the play, we may say that 414 B.C. was the year of the disgrace and sentence of death pronounced on Alcibiades.

We now come to consider the evidence regarding the probable date of the play which reaches us as the result of the application of the various metrical tests. These are of a very interesting character. Only in

one or two cases can we obtain the separate results for the portions that are Shakespeare's as distinct from those of the other writer. The length of the drama is 2358 lines. Of these only 596 are in prose, occurring generally, but by no means wholly, in the non-Shakespearian parts of the play. Blank verse prevails to the extent of 1560 lines, a decided decrease. Of pentameter lines there are 184, while rhyme prevails in the play to the extent of 8.5 per cent., a very decided increase and reversion to earlier methods. This element is not confined to the work of George Wilkins, but is apparent also in the verse that is unmistakably Shakespearian. Of feminine endings the percentage is 24.7, while of light and weak endings there are sixteen of the former and five of the latter. Of *enjambement* as an element in the verse of the play, the percentage of its occurrence is 32.5, while the speech-ending test registers a percentage of 62.8.

The verse certainly reveals the influence of Shakespeare's latest manner as already coming upon him. The style is hurried and breathless, as though he were impatient with the slow medium of speech for the expression of his thick-coming fancies. Ellipsis is now beginning to appear in many of the speeches; also short and broken lines in the dialogue.

The result which the metrical tests as a whole give us is that the play before us should be placed very near the border line of the Fourth Period along with *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus*.

The sources whence the materials for the drama have been drawn are Plutarch's *Life of Mark Antony*, Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*, and Lucian's dialogue, *Timon or the Misanthrope*. Of course, it will be urged that Lucian was not then translated into English. There were, however, translations into Latin and French, and there can be little doubt that Shakespeare consulted Lucian, for, as has been indicated by a German writer, there must have been a French or

Italian text open before the English dramatists from the use of the term "solidares" for the coins offered by Lucullus to Flaminius.[1]

The plot is the world-old story of the rich fool and his fair-weather friends. Timon, a wealthy lord of Athens, finds his chief delight in showering costly gifts upon his friends. They soon learn that, if they want anything, they have only to present a small offering to Timon to have it repaid an hundred-fold. In vain his steward, Flavius, warns him that he is living far beyond his means. He will not listen at first, and then when he does he insists that as he had helped his friends so his friends will help him whenever need arises. At last the inevitable crash comes, and he is a beggar. He then sends to his friends, expecting that they will relieve his need. It is, however, the inevitable result. In his distress they know him not, and he who had lavished his all on them cannot from them even get a meal. He therefore leaves everything and retires to the woods to live on roots, and to rail against the falsehood of his fellows and the cruelty of Nature. He anticipates Tennyson's lament over "Nature red in tooth and claw,"[2] and finds robbery and rapine all around in the world: sun, moon, sea, earth, nature, man—all are at war and love is nowhere.

Yet although he rails on all around, the fact that his bitterness does not proceed from a selfish or self-centred root is manifested when he finds an enormous treasure in the forest and becomes even wealthier than he was before. But the gold he used of old for the salvation and help of others, he uses now for their destruction, giving it to thieves and to courtesans who prey on the public, also to Alcibiades to pay his soldiers who are marching on Athens to destroy it. Apemantus, a cynic philosopher, who has lived in penury and misery

[1] B. Tschischwitz in the German Shakespearian *Jahrbuch*, iv. 196.
[2] *In Memoriam*, lvi. 15.

all his days, is introduced as a sort of foil to Timon. The former had no cause for the hatred of men he professes to feel. They had never flattered and fawned on him, therefore Timon tells the hypocrite philosopher to " begone "—

> " If thou hadst not been born the worst of men,
> Thou hadest been a knave and flatterer."

Timon is railing against all men and saying that all are faithless, when suddenly the proof is given to him that they are not so. Flavius, his former steward, follows him to his cave, and begs to be allowed to serve him still, but without fee or reward. Timon sees in him, however, only the one honest man which proves the rule of the general faithlessness of mankind. He gives him wealth on condition that he will hate all men. Then the senators of Athens, alarmed by the attack being made on the city by Alcibiades, visit him to pray him to come back and be their captain. His reply is a stern refusal. But the violence of his emotion exhausts the springs of life, and he sinks into the grave, inimical to his fellows to the very end.

The other thread of the plot, records the history of Alcibiades, the man of action, as opposed to Timon, the man of imagination. The Senate had rejected the suit of Alcibiades as it had rejected that of Timon. While the latter had been eating out his heart in retirement and indulging in frothy execrations against the ingratitude of the Athenians, the former had collected an army with the money he got from Timon, and after bringing Athens to her knees to sue for peace and pardon, he entered the city in triumph, while the misanthrope lay dead and forgotten beside the hungry lip of the ever restless sea.

There are only three or four characters in the drama that really merit analysis. In Timon, a personage which is wholly Shakespearian in conception and execution, we have an example of a noble nature

gone awry. The evil has been done before we meet him. Had his parents or guardians taught him the rule that the golden mean in all things, alike as regards the regulation of our own conduct, towards ourselves or towards our neighbour, is the only way to ensure a happy life and a peaceful death, Timon's disastrous end might have been avoided. Instead of that, he had been taught that personal gratification, at all costs, is the sole highway to happiness, and he treads it with impulsive enthusiasm. He mistakes the wanton profusion of the spendthrift for generosity. He does not realise the name, far less the character, of true friendship. He thinks that the careless and nonchalant throwing of princely gifts at the feet of his friends is an evidence of true affection, and he expects to get, in proportion as he gave to these fair-weather friends. Even after his experience of their ingratitude he might have risen to splendid heights of self-sacrificing devotion, and have shown that disaster only made him and did not mar him. In place of that, he buries himself in the desert to vent his curses upon deceitful man, and gives to maledictions what was meant for the amelioration of mankind. In Timon we see the utter failure of the doctrine of equality and community of goods. Men may profess it while getting: they repudiate it when called on for the giving.

Of Timon, Dowden says: "How are we to bear ourselves to those that wrong us? How shall we attain to the most just and noble attitude of soul in which life and the injuries of life may be confronted? Now here in Timon we see one way in which a man may make his response to the injuries of life; he may turn upon the world with a fruitless and suicidal rage. Shakespeare was interested in the history of Timon not merely as a dramatic study, and not merely for the sake of moral edification, but because he recognised in the Athenian misanthrope one whom he had known, an intimate acquaintance, the Timon of Shakespeare's

own breast. Shall we hesitate to admit that there was such a Timon in the breast of Shakespeare? We are accustomed to speak of Shakespeare's gentleness and Shakespeare's tolerance so foolishly, that we find it easier to conceive of Shakespeare as indulgent towards baseness and wickedness, than as feeling measureless rage and indignation against them—rage and indignation, which would sometimes flash beyond their bounds, and strike at the whole wicked race of man."

Gervinus says: "Timon has bartered friendship for falsehood, society for abandonment, prodigality for avarice; he has found a curse in the midst of blessing; misery in the midst of happiness; the shipwreck of all his noble feelings reverses his whole nature. With a mind unfortified and of little strength he cannot overcome the injuries of fate; his spirit is drowned and lost in misfortune which he has never be inured to bear. The mere man of the world whose mind has hitherto been only seen with a smooth surface, is now roused by the storm of passion which reverses all things."

Alcibiades is a splendid foil for Timon's declamations. He has no time to give to declamations, his declamations being "writ large" in the history of his country. A man to whom action is the noblest eloquence, he desires that his deeds may speak for him more than his words. He too had known the misery caused by ingratitude, but instead of breaking his heart over the matter, he proceeded to teach his native land a lesson in the ethics of gratitude which she was never to forget. Shakespeare (says Gervinus) represents him without any ideality, as a man of coarse texture, who is in no way enthusiastic about the extreme ends of things. To this Dowden adds: "Alcibiades, who is of an active, practical, unideal temperament, is not able to discover wisdom in the suffering of evils which by opposing a man may end. Though possessed of none of the potential nobleness of Timon, Alcibiades possesses one virtue, that of

perceiving such facts as lie within the range of his limited observation."

Flavius also is a noble picture of a thoroughly faithful, thoroughly trustworthy steward. To him the honour of his master is his own honour. He suffers as intensely as Timon when the crash comes, but in place of turning round and saying, "There, I told you so," he begs to be allowed to serve his former master as his steward, gratuitously. Flavius is one of those rare souls who find their highest delight in the good of others. Apemantus is a keenly satiric sketch of a misanthrope without reason. To him fortune has never been unkind, unless in the sense that she has never given him any gifts at all. He rails because it pays. He would flatter if it paid better. The false friends are capitally described, with their fair-weather enthusiasm for their dupe while it was worth while, and their ungrateful depreciation of him when the winter of his discontent had come. If, as is probable, they were drawn by Wilkins, he must have possessed considerable powers of satire.

Section 9.—Pericles. 1607–8

The other play, in which George Wilkins collaborated with Shakespeare, was *Pericles, Prince of Tyre.* In this, more than in the former piece, we have the two styles very clearly differentiated. So much is this the case, that the "Story of Marina" has been separated from that of "Pericles" and definitely assigned to Shakespeare. This division many critics now maintain to be the true one, viz., that Wilkins had nearly completed a play on *Pericles*,[1] largely based on an unpublished novel which he had written that same year (1608), viz., *The Painful Adventures of Pericles, Prynce*

[1] *Cf.* "On Wilkins's Share in the Play called Shakespeare's 'Pericles,'" by Robert Boyle—*New Shakespeare Society's Transactions*, 1880-5.

of Tyre. Being the True History of Pericles, as it was lately presented by the worthy and ancient Poet, John Gower. This novel, to which (as Professor Ward says) the figure of Gower serves as a frontispiece, is introduced by a preface begging the reader to receive the "Historie" in the same manner as it was "by the King's Majestie's Players excellently presented." It enumerates all the personages of the story after the manner of a drama, and all bear precisely the same names as those in the play.[1] The great German Shakespearian critic, Professor Delius, in his edition of Shakespeare, thinks that Wilkins composed the play of *Pericles*, with the assistance of Laurence Twine's novel on the subject, *Patterne of Paineful Adventures: Containing the most excellent, pleasant and Variable Historie of the strange accidents that befell unto Prince Apollonius, the Lady Lucina his wife, and Tharsia his daughter*, and Gower's *Confessio Amantis*. Then Shakespeare came on the scene and prepared the piece for the use of the "King's Players," who produced it at "The Globe" under his name. Shakespeare adapted the play, by expanding the "Marina" story until it became a distinct and separate thread of action extending throughout the entire drama. It achieved great success when produced. Wilkins, having still further adapted his novel so as to embrace the alterations made by Shakespeare, issued it, in order, as he says, "that the poor infant of his brain might be associated with its real father."[2]

The date of the composition of the play, therefore, was 1607–8. As to its publication, Edward Blount, later on to be associated with the issue of the First Folio, obtained a licence for the publication of *Pericles*

[1] Ward's *English Dramatic Literature*, vol. ii. pp. 183-184.

[2] *Cf.* Professor Ward's remarks on this matter, *English Dramatic Literature*, vol. ii. pp. 183-184. The Professor adds that Wilkins's novel, founded upon Shakespeare's play, was edited by Tycho Mommsen, with a Preface by the editor and an Introduction by J. P. Collier, Oldenburg, 1857.

on 20th May 1608. He was seemingly anticipated by another publisher, Gosson, who issued in 1609 a wretched edition of the piece in Quarto (Q1), of which this is the title page: *The Late | and much admired Play | called | Pericles Prince | of Tyre | With the true Relation of the whole Historie | adventures and fortunes of the said Prince: | As also | the no lesse strange and worthy accidents | in the Birth and Life, of his Daughter |* MARIANA. *| As it hath been divers and sundry times acted by | his Majesties Servants at the Globe on | the Banckside | By William Shakespeare. | Imprinted at London for Henry Gosson and are | to be sold at the signe of the Sunne in | Paternoster Row etc. |* 1609.

The Second Quarto (Q2) was issued in the same year, a third (Q3) in 1611, a fourth (Q4) in 1619, a fifth (Q5) in 1630, a sixth (Q6) in 1635.

These repeated Quarto editions make the omission of *Pericles* from the First and Second Folios very remarkable, as it seems to be a proof that, at that time, at least, the drama was regarded as rather the work of Wilkins than of Shakespeare.

Some critics have contended that there is evidence of a second hand in the non-Shakespearian pieces, and William Rowley and Cyril Tourneur have respectively been suggested as the authors. The theory is now being dropped.

Pericles was, however, included in the Third Folio.

For nearly a hundred years critics refused to credit the Shakespearian authorship of *Pericles*. It was regarded as a type of a bad play that by some curious accident had achieved great but unmerited success. Ben Jonson in his *Ode to Himself* (1629), beginning "Come leave the loathèd stage," after the failure of his play, *New Inn*, speaks of it as—

> "Some mouldy tale
> Like Pericles, and stale
> As the Shrieve's crusts and nasty as his fish."

Robert Tailor in the Prologue to *The Hog has Lost his Pearl* says of his play—

> " If it prove so happy as to please
> We'll say 'tis fortunate like Pericles; "

while Tatham in 1652 says—

> ' Shakespeare the plebeian driller was
> Foundered in's Pericles and must not pass."

These unfavourable criticisms were directed against the loathsome scenes of Act IV. Mr. Fleay has extracted the " Story of Marina " from Wilkins's work, the result being, as Professor Gollancz says, " a charming Shakespearian romance." [1]

The scene of the action of the drama is in various countries. In the first act, in Antioch, Tyre, Tarsus; in the second, in Pentapolis and Tyre; in the third, in Ephesus and Tarsus; in the fourth, in Tarsus and Mitylene; and in the fifth, at Mitylene and Ephesus.

The Time-Analysis gives the duration of the action of the play as covering a period of fifteen or sixteen years, of which fourteen days are represented on the stage, the chief intervals being announced in the choruses [2]—

Day	I.	embracing	Act	I.	Sc. i.;	Interval.
	II.	,,	,,	I.	,, ii.-iii.;	Interval.
	III.	,,	,,	I.	,, iv.;	Interval, 2nd Chorus.
	IV.	,,	,,	II.	,, i.	
	V.	,,	,,	II.	,, ii.-iv.	
	VI.	,,	,,	II.	,, v.;	Interval, 3rd Chorus.
	VII.	,,	,,	III.	,, i.	
	VIII.	,,	,,	III.	,, ii.;	Interval.
	IX.	,,	,,	III.	,, iii.-iv.;	Interval 14 years, 4th Chorus.
	X.	,,	,,	IV.	,, i.;	Interval.
	XI.	,,	,,	IV.	,, ii.-iii.;	Interval, 5th Chorus (Act IV. Sc. iv.).
	XII.	,,	,,	IV.	,, v.-vi.;	Interval, 6th Chorus.
	XIII.	,,	,,	V.	,, i.;	Interval, 7th Chorus (Act V. Sc. ii.).
,,	XIV.	,,	,,	V.		

[1] *See* the Professor's remarks on this point, Larger Temple Shakespeare, Preface to the play.

[2] *Cf.* Daniel's " Time-Analysis of Shakespeare's Plays "—*New Shakespeare Society's Transactions.*

We come now to consider the evidence derived from the metrical tests as applied to the whole play, the work of Wilkins and that of Shakespeare being regarded as one.

Of the entire play there are 2386 lines, 418 being in prose and 1436 in blank verse. Of pentameter rhymes there are in the piece 225, and rhyme as an element occurs in it to the extent of 18.8 per cent., the reversion to the earlier style being due to Wilkins's work. Feminine endings register 20.2 per cent.; while, of light and weak endings, in Shakespeare's portion alone there are 20 of the former and 10 of the latter. From the speech-ending test we get upon the authority of Dr. Bradley 71 per cent. for Acts III., IV., and V., and 19.0 per cent. for Acts I., II.

The consensus of the metrical testimony goes to place the play, as regards its Shakespearian portions at least, on the border line of the Fourth Period of Shakespeare's development.

As we have already seen, the sources whence the materials for the play were drawn were Laurence Twine's novel, the *Patterne of Paineful Adventures*, and John Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, in which occurred the legend of Apollonius of Tyre. Gower took his story from the *Pantheon* of Godfrey of Viterbo, a twelfth-century work in Latin.

The plot as it unwinds itself in the drama may briefly be said to concern itself with the loss by Pericles, Prince of Tyre, of his daughter Marina and his wife Thaisa, and their reunion again. The life-story of Marina as contained in Acts III., IV., and V. should be read by itself.

The characters are somewhat confused in execution owing to the very marked and apparent difference between the supreme touch of Shakespeare and the less firm one of Wilkins. Pericles is a noble creation, especially as he appears in the closing acts of the play—a man whom all the buffets of the world have

only rendered more magnanimous, more generous, more sympathetic, and more considerate for others.

Marina is altogether charming, a blossom of heavenly hue and fragrance, one of Nature's ladies, pure as the driven snow, and with a heart that goes forth in love to every created thing. Thaisa, the long-separated Queen of Pericles, is not only a woman worthy to be loved, but a wife worthy to be waited for during all the years of separation, because her like was not to be met again.

The Shakespearian section of the play is marvellously beautiful. Whether he adapted it or wrote it, the work is worthy of his best period, showing as it does a pregnancy of thought united to a poignancy of tragic intensity, and a beauty alike of fancy and of language that indicates the hand and the art of the master.

Section 10.—Antony and Cleopatra. 1608

We now reach *Antony and Cleopatra*, the last but one of the great tragedies produced by Shakespeare. The strain of creation was beginning to tell even upon his colossal genius, and in this play we first note signs, not of exhaustion, but of intellectual weariness.

Of the play itself Dr. Johnson says: "This play keeps curiosity always busy and the passions always interested. The continual hurry of the action, the variety of incidents, and the quick succession of one personage to another, call the mind forward without intermission from the first act to the last. But the power of delighting is derived principally from the frequent changes of the scene: for, except the feminine arts, some of which are too low, which distinguish Cleopatra, no character is very strongly discriminated."

Hazlitt also remarks: "This is a very noble play. Though not in the first class of Shakespeare's productions, it stands next to them, and is, we think, the finest of his Historical Plays, that is, of those in which

he made poetry the organ of history, and assumed a certain tone of character and sentiment in conformity to known facts, instead of trusting to his observations of general nature, or to the unlimited indulgence of his own fancy. What he has added to the history is on a par with it. His genius was, as it were, a match for history as well as nature, and could grapple at will with either."

Hallam says: "*Antony and Cleopatra* does not furnish, perhaps, so many striking beauties as *Julius Cæsar*, but is at least equally redolent of the genius of Shakespeare. Antony indeed was given to him by history, and he has but embodied in his own vivid colours the irregular mind of the Triumvir, ambitious and daring against all enemies but himself. In Cleopatra he had less to guide him; she is another incarnation of the same passions."

Thomas Campbell adds: "If I were to select any historical play of Shakespeare in which he has combined an almost literal fidelity to history with an equally faithful adherence to the truth of nature . . . it would be *Antony and Cleopatra*. He paints Cleopatra as if the gypsy herself had cast her spell over him and given her own witchcraft to his pencil."

The date of the composition of the play is, with practical unanimity, assigned to the close of 1607 and the beginning of 1608. Its date of licence for publication is our sole guide. On the same day as Edward Blount secured the licence for the issue of the play of *Pericles*, he obtained from the Stationers' Company another permit, on the authority of Sir George Buck, licenser of plays, for the publication of *Antony and Cleopatra*, the statement being appended that it had not been "formerly entered to any man." No copy, however, has been seen of the Quarto in question, and in all probability it was never issued. The earliest publication of the piece, therefore, was in the Folio of 1623. The text is good, being set in all likeli-

hood from a carefully revised and transcribed MS. copy.

The scene of the play is given as "In several parts of the Roman Empire." The first act is located successively at Alexandria and Rome, then reverts to Alexandria; the second at Messina, Rome, Alexandria, and Misenum; the third at "A Plain in Syria," Rome, Alexandria, Athens, Actium, "A Plain near Actium," Alexandria, "Egypt, Cæsar's Camp," and again Alexandria; the fourth and the fifth acts are located in or around Alexandria, where the end takes place of Cleopatra and all her greatness.

The Time-Analysis gives as the duration of the action of the drama twelve days with intervals, distributed as follows[1]—

ay	I.	embracing	Act	I.	Sc.	i.-iv.;	Interval of twenty days.
,,	II.	,,	,,	I.	,,	v.; II.	i.-iii.
,,	III.	,,	,,	II.	,,	iv.;	Interval.
,,	IV.	,,	,,	II.	,,	v.-vii.;	[III. iii.]; Interval (?).
,,	V.	,,	,,	III.	,,	i.-ii.;	Interval.
,,	VI.	,,	,,	III.	,,	iv.-v.;	Interval.
,,	VII.	,,	,,	III.	,,	vi.	
,,	VIII.	,,	,,	III.	,,	vii.	
,,	IX.	,,	,,	III.	,,	viii.-x.;	Interval.
,,	X.	,,	,,	III.	,,	xi.-xiii.;	IV. i.-iii.
,,	XI.	,,	,,	IV.	,,	iv.-ix.;	
,,	XII.	,,	,,	IV.	,,	x.-xv.;	V. i.-ii.

The following evidence reaches us from the application of the various metrical tests. Of the 3964 lines which compose it, only 255 are in prose, with 2761 lines in the blank verse of Shakespeare's last period, tense, terse, and broken; seemingly also so thought-laden that language is too weak and inefficient a medium for the expression of his mighty imaginings. What Professor Herford so aptly styles "the obtrusive symmetries of lyrical verse" are disregarded, and we find the verse broken up into well-nigh all kinds of forms that will suit the conveyance of the thought.

[1] From Mr. P. A. Daniel's "Time-Analysis of Shakespeare's Plays"—*New Shakespeare Society's Transactions*, 1877-9.

The distribution of pauses, which in his earlier plays was so carefully regarded, is now absolutely neglected. This may tend to impart that feature of "happy valiancy" which Coleridge detected in the drama, but it tends often to render the sense obscure. Rhyme now practically disappears, only 42 instances of pentameter rhymes occurring in the whole piece, the total rhyme-percentage being 0.7, a large decrease from the preceding plays. Practically speaking, this play and *Coriolanus*, upon the evidence of the metrical tests, should be relegated to the Fourth Period, did not other considerations, to be named presently, retain them in the Third. Feminine or double endings increase to a percentage of 26.5, and one of the outstanding features of the play is the large number of light and weak endings, there being 71 of the former and 28 of the latter. End-stopped lines are really at a minimum, while the percentage of run-on or enjambed lines rises to 43.3. The speech-ending test also gives us an increased percentage of 77.5. Visible all through the play is a sort of breathless haste, as though the author were anxious to complete the work and obtain rest. More than once also the conviction is borne home to the reader that the day of gloom, and the burden of scandal—whatever it may have been—of trouble, and of anxiety, combined with the prodigious effort of the "Problem Plays," had induced brain-weariness, and that the chance of a serious breakdown both in health and spirits was impending.

The sources whence the materials for the drama were drawn are not far to seek. In Plutarch's *Life of Marcus Antonius* we have the complete story of the relations of Antony and Cleopatra, narrated with an artistic skill and a realism as graphic as it is great. Shakespeare kept closely by Plutarch as a guide, some of the very phrases of North's noble translation being incorporated into the text of the play.

The plot is simply the record of the *liaison* between Cleopatra, the beautiful Queen of Egypt, and Marcus Antonius, with the utter ruin inflicted on the latter by the former. As this *motif* of the drama corresponds with that present in *Lear, Troilus and Cressida, Measure for Measure,* and *Macbeth,* viz., that the ruin of great men or men high in place should be brought about through the instrumentality of a woman, for that reason *Antony and Cleopatra* has been retained in this period because it forms with them a rounded cycle of dramas all dealing with special phases of woman's sway over man. Cleopatra met Antony at the time when he was Triumvir along with Octavius Cæsar and Lepidus, and, at the River Cydnus, occurred that famous meeting of Antony with Cleopatra, which was to exercise more influence for evil on the future of Antony than any other event in his life. From that day to the hour of his death, he was her slave, and with supreme art, Shakespeare details the studied fascinations by which she first caught then kept him, and the successive steps of his infatuation. He neglected his first wife Fulvia and his second Octavia for her, and recklessly brought dishonour on his name. He was unquestionably, next to Julius Cæsar, the greatest general in the Roman State—at that time neither Republic nor Empire—but he was easily vanquished both on sea and land by Octavius. Nay, the charge of cowardice could with reason be levelled against him for his conduct on the day of the Battle of Actium. That it was infatuation pure and simple, is evident from the fact that even when she had played him false, and betrayed him to Rome, he clung to her. For him certainly Cleopatra had a sincere love, though she loved herself better. Her death, after Antony was no more, was assuredly dictated by love, for Cleopatra had a keen love of life, and not the mere dread of appearing in a Roman triumph would have driven her to suicide. Her fascinations had accom-

plished too much in the past. The plot, therefore, is rather a series of vivid pictures than the evolution of separate threads of events or of intrigue.[1] *Antony and Cleopatra*, for sheer imagination, falls little behind the greatest of the tragedies.

The other characters are dwarfed in comparison with the two leading personages. Antony is not the gay, giddy trifler of *Julius Cæsar*, of which this drama was intended to form the continuation or sequel. He was now the stern veteran soldier, a far-seeing, effective general. From being the wild debauchee of the days of Cæsar's dictatorship, the fellow of Clodius and of Curio in all their vile sensualism and headlong excesses, he had developed into a calm, cool statesman, with a remedy for every desperate emergency. Not that he could not still plunge into excess when occasion arose! But such was the Protean variety of his nature, that he could delight men of culture and of learning by conversations on the object of their studies, yet the next moment plunge into love-making with Cleopatra as though that had been the chief end of his existence. The variance of forces good and bad within him, led him at one moment to delight in strong-minded Fulvia, at another in the calm, virtuous, noble-hearted Octavia, at a third in the sensual, passionate Cleopatra. He had neither moral stamina nor intellectual steadfastness in himself. Obliged always to lean upon some nature, his alternate terms of morality and sensuality were conditioned by the friends or the wife which exercised sway for the time being.[2] Had Antony thrown in his lot with the virtuous Octavia at the death of Fulvia, he might have passed down the decades of history as a great administrator or a matchless soldier, who, with the world at his feet, preferred that kingship of self-control in which his only kingdom was his own mind. The baleful figure of Egypt's

[1] Sidney Lanier, *Lectures on Shakespeare*, vol. ii. p. 222.
[2] Kreyssig, *Vorlesungen über Shakespeare*, vol. ii. p. 322.

Queen crossed his path; he seemed to find in her, rather than in Octavia, his *alter ego*, or other self, and in place of achieving the grandest of all conquests—the conquest of self—he made himself immortal by a madness, a man who lost his manhood's glory for a woman's smiles and wiles.

Of Antony, Professor Lounsbury writes: "In certain ways the *Antony and Cleopatra* of Shakespeare is one of the most astonishing of the many astonishing exhibitions the poet has afforded of that almost divine insight and intuition, which enabled him to comprehend at a glance, that complete whole of which other men after painful toil learn but a beggarly part. . . . It is a gorgeous gallery, in which each personage stands out so distinct, that there is no danger of misapprehension or confusion as to the parts they fill. Antony appears the soldier and voluptuary he was, swayed alternately by love, by regret, by ambition, at one moment the great ruler of the divided world, at the next, recklessly flinging away his future at the dictation of a passionate caprice."

Professor Courthope also says: "Antony's character in its extraordinary versatility, orator, soldier, debauchee—a Henry V. without his power of self-control—furnished one of those contradictory problems of human nature which Shakespeare was accustomed to study with sympathetic insight. Antony throughout the play recognises that he is acting against his deliberate resolution under the irresistible influence of passion. 'I followed that I blush to look upon; my very hairs do mutiny.'"

"In *Antony and Cleopatra*, and especially in the character of Antony (says Goethe), it is proclaimed with a thousand tongues that self-indulgence and achievement are absolutely incompatible."

As Gervinus says, never was a pair of human beings more wonderfully formed for each other than Antony and Cleopatra. In outward form they vie with each

other. If she be "that Venus, where we see the fancy outwork nature," he was "Nature's masterpiece, whom even his enemy Philo has to call 'a Mars.'"

To both are given grace and courtliness; all they do is instinct with dignity and beauty. When the play opens the inclinations of Antony have already been taken captive. His duty he knows lies in Rome, but his heart is in Egypt. He realises, however, if he is not to lose all and Cleopatra to boot, he must rouse himself from the Circe-like spell. He goes, but it is only by permission of Cleopatra. She realises that absence will weld the chains of her influence more strongly upon him. She it is who sends him away though he knows it not. To have kept him then would have made for early satiety of his passion. She desires that his love should be blown into flame afresh, and she actually parts with him that this may happen —and it does! Truly has she been named "Queen of Egypt and of Love." She is Venus Victrix in the absolute control she has over the human heart. Every wile to warm or to wither love she knows: every spell to break through the armour of assumed indifference she is mistress of, and she plays her game of love with a tactical skill and a worldly wisdom as marvellous as it is mysterious. She is truly the "Old Serpent of the Nile." All the glory and the glamour of that gilded wickedness which made Alexandria, after Rome, the virtual capital of the Roman world, was incarnate in her. She was a past mistress in sin before she had crossed the Rubicon of the teens. She was a Circe and a Calypso in one, for all who surrendered in the slightest to the witchery of her wiles became debased and bestial in their inclinations. Shakespeare has painted her power of fascination as well as her capacity for enjoyment in one immortal passage—

> "Age cannot wither her nor custom stale
> Her infinite variety; other women cloy

The appetites they feed; but she makes hungry
Where most she satisfies; for vilest things
Become themselves in her."

Dr. Garnett thus writes of Shakespeare's Cleopatra in his *English Literature:* "She is perhaps the most wonderful of all Shakespeare's studies of female character. He follows Plutarch's delineation closely, but performs the same miracle upon it as Venus wrought upon the effigy of Galatea: a beautiful image becomes a living being. Perhaps the keynote of the personality is what Shakespeare terms 'her infinite variety;' there is room in her for every phase of female character. The same amplitude characterises the play itself, with its great sweep in time and place, its continual changes of scene, its crowd of personages, its multitude of speeches, and its profusion of poetical imagery."

H. W. Mabie says: "Cleopatra is the greatest of enchantresses: she has wit, grace, humour, the intoxication of sex breathes from her, she unites the passion of a great temperament with the fathomless coquetry of a courtesan of genius. She is passionately alive, avid of sensation, consumed with love of pleasure, imperious in her demands for that absolute homage which slays honour and saps manhood at the very springs of its power. This superb embodiment of femininity, untouched by pity and untroubled by conscience, has a compelling charm born in the mystery of passion and taking on the radiance of a thousand moods." [1]

Paul Heyse remarks in his edition of the play: "The conception of a woman with a power so demoniacal that it mystifies both sense and reason as here floated before the imagination of the poet, perhaps before his memory—for we must seek in the confessions of the 'Sonnets' for the earliest studies of this Cleopatra—will rarely find on the stage an incarnation which,

[1] H. W. Mabie, *Shakespeare, Poet, Dramatist, and Man*, p. 271.

even to a certain extent, will justify the hero in holding indifferent the gain or loss of a hemisphere in comparison with separation from his enchantress. When we can be brought to believe in such an elemental power of this passion, then and then only can we face the shame of the hero, not with a disapproving shrug, but with that tragic shock which the horror of every inexorable fate always awakens in us."

Ten Brink says: "Artistically considered, Cleopatra is perhaps the masterpiece among Shakespeare's female characters; given the problem, Shakespeare has solved it as no one else could have done. But what conflicts must his soul have endured, what bitter experiences must he not have passed through, to have set himself such a problem, to have created a woman so widely different from all those he had pictured before, a woman so devoid of the ideal womanly graces, yet so irresistible, for whose sake Antony sacrifices the dominion of the world." [1]

Victor Hugo remarks: "Cleopatra is the fatal enchantress who initiated Rome into the startling mysteries of Oriental voluptuousness. She is the invisible sorceress who sweeps the masters of the globe into the dizzy whirl of an Egyptian bacchanal. . . . Cleopatra is the supreme type of seduction. The spell which she weaves is the greatest triumph of feminine magic. . . . Cleopatra had in her heart the flame that purifies everything—she loves! It is by love that the royal courtesan stands revealed, it is by love that she is rehabilitated! Ay, this Antony whom she teases, whom she torments, whom she maddens, this Antony whom at one time she abjures and unscrupulously deceives with Thyreus—she loves him to distraction; for the minute Antony is absent Cleopatra is desolate." [2]

In Cleopatra we have Shakespeare's portrait of

[1] Ten Brink, *Five Lectures on Shakespeare*, p. 90.
[2] Victor Hugo, *Shakespeare*, vol. vii. p. 9.

transcendant beauty and grace without virtue: in Octavia, Antony's wife, we have transcendant beauty and grace with all the majesty of virtue and purity to boot. Shakespeare has often, by a few lines, created a contrasted pair that thrills us with all the force of a matchless painting. His rival portraits of the two women that are fighting the world's battle for Antony's salvation, is one of the greatest and the grandest achievements which even he has done. Cleopatra dies with the stern Stoic courage of a Roman matron in defence of her love, but we feel that the world is all the better that she is gone; to Octavia, as she takes leave of her brother and of the play, we feel inclined to rise and stand with bared head as she passes from us for ever, feeling that the world has been all the better for her presence and her example, and will be the poorer when she goes.

Octavius is still the Octavius of *Julius Cæsar*, calm, cool, calculating, who would send his dearest friend to the block if he chanced to stand in the way of his advancement: who, on the other hand, would stoop to kiss the mouth of his deadliest enemy, if thereby he could disarm his enmity for the time being. A statesman and a diplomat, who would have sold his soul for the sovereignty of the world, and perhaps did so, for he never knew a happy hour after that whereon the prize was gained. Enobarbus is a fine portrait of the faithful adherent who is actually driven into desertion by his master's madness—

> —" when valour preys on reason
> It eats the sword it fights with. I will seek
> Some way to leave him "—

yet repents almost ere he has carried the thought into action, and kills himself, with the name " Antony, Antony," on his lips. With Enobarbus goes Antony's better self. Cleopatra's attendants, Charmian and Iras, are also designed to be the parallel portraits of fidelity to Enobarbus. They, however, die with their

mistress, because her affection for them had shown itself in numberless ways whereby she sought to provide for their safety, and their exceeding love desired no better fate than to enter within the veil of the Unseen with her. Iras had already crossed the threshold of Death before Cleopatra, while Charmian speedily followed her, having only lingered long enough to adjust her mistress's crown, which had fallen awry, then she applied the deadly asp to her own bosom, and to the Roman guards, who seemed by their protest to question their right to seek escape by death, "Charmian, is this well done?" she haughtily replied as she passed into the Silence, "It is well done, and fitting for a princess descended of so many kings."

The dying speeches in this play of those characters that prefer to face the uncertainty of the "something after death" to the misery and gloom of a present that is steeped in dishonour, reach the high-water mark of Shakespearian tragedy. As Winter says: "Shakespeare's vast imagination was here loosed upon colossal images and imperial splendours. The passions that clash or mingle in this piece are like the ocean surges, fierce, glittering, terrible, glorious. The theme is the ruin of a demigod; the adjuncts are empires. Wealth of every sort is poured forth with regal and limitless profusion. The language glows with a prodigal emotion and towers to a sublime height of eloquence. . . . Antony and Cleopatra are lovers, but not lovers only. It is the splendid stature and infinite variety of character in them that render them puissant in fascination. Each becomes majestic in the hour of danger and pathetically heroic in the hour of death." [1]

SECTION II.—CORIOLANUS. 1609

We come now to consider the last of Shakespeare's tragedies, one which likewise takes high rank among

[1] W. Winter, *Old Shrines and Ivy*, p. 219.

his greatest and most sterling achievements. From beginning to end, the dramatic interest is maintained at a level of intensity and sublimity almost unparalleled even in Shakespeare, and then only in his four or five supreme tragedies.

Mr. A. C. Swinburne thus writes of the play: "A loftier or a more perfect piece of man's work was never done in all the world than this tragedy of *Coriolanus*." Mr. Stopford Brooke, on the other hand, says: "It has been greatly praised and even compared for dramatic interest with *Othello*. For my part I cannot feel that. Shakespeare's power in it, magnificent in many places, is not so equally distributed as in the greater plays, and the splendid passages make the change of amalgamating power even more remarkable. Then it is . . . a one-man play. The figure of Coriolanus and his fate, of Coriolanus in a two-fold relation —to his mother and to the people—dominates almost too overwhelmingly the interest of the rest of the drama." [1]

Hazlitt remarks of the piece: "Shakespeare in this play has shown himself well versed in history and State affairs. *Coriolanus* is a storehouse of political commonplaces. The arguments for and against aristocracy or democracy, on the privileges of the few and the claims of the many, on liberty and slavery, power and the abuse of it, peace and war, are here very ably handled with the spirit of a poet and the acuteness of a philosopher. Shakespeare himself seems to have had a leaning towards the arbitrary side of the question, perhaps from some feeling of contempt for his own origin, and to have spared no occasion of baiting the rabble."

The drama was written in 1609. Upon that point there is now very little disagreement among Shakespearian scholars. *Coriolanus* was not printed until it appeared in the First Folio in 1623, where it stands

[1] Stopford Brooke, *On Ten Plays of Shakespeare*, p. 221.

the first of the Tragedies. The text is very corrupt. It unquestionably belongs to the latest epoch that can be associated with the tragic period. Shakespeare's lyric manner has here entirely disappeared. The verse is thought-packed to such a degree that the melody becomes harsh and strained. Symptoms of declining freshness of dramatic invention can be traced here and there, but in no feature more saliently than by the endowment of certain of the characters with typical traits after the manner of Jonson. In *Coriolanus*, moreover, intellect is more strongly in evidence than imagination.

The scene of the action of the play is stated to be Rome and its neighbourhood, Corioli and its neighbourhood, and Antium.

The Time-Analysis of the duration of the action of the play gives eleven days with intervals, while the historical time embraced would be about four years, from the secession to the Mons Sacer, to the death of Coriolanus, 488-484 B.C. The eleven days are thus distributed [1]—

Day	I.	embracing	Act	I.	Sc. i.;	Interval.
,,	II.	,,	,,	I.	,, ii.;	,,
,,	III.	,,	,,	I.	,, iii.-x.;	,,
,,	IV.	,,	,,	II.	,, i.;	,,
,,	V.	,,	,,	II.	,, ii. to IV. ii.	
,,	VI.	,,	,,	IV.	,, iii.	
,,	VII.	,,	,,	IV.	,, iv.-v.;	Interval.
,,	VIII.	,,	,,	IV.	,, vi.;	,,
,,	IX.	,,	,,	IV.	,, vii.;	,,
,,	X.	,,	,,	V.	,, i.-v.;	,,
,,	XI.	,,	,,	V.	,, vi.	

We now come to consider the evidence furnished towards the settlement of the date of composition, by the metrical tests applied to the play. The total length of the drama is 3392 lines. Of these there are 829 in prose and 2521 in blank verse—verse of the particular character already specified as peculiar to

[1] *Cf.* P. A. Daniel, "Time-Analysis of Shakespeare's Plays"—*Transactions of New Shakespeare Society*, 1877-9.

this period. The same qualities of style are found here, as were apparent in *Antony and Cleopatra*, but in an even more pronounced form. Rhyme has almost entirely disappeared, the percentage being only 0.9. Of feminine endings the percentage is 28.4, an advance upon *Antony and Cleopatra* of 2 per cent., while of light endings and weak endings there are 60 of the former and 44 of the latter. Then as regards enjambed lines, we have a percentage of 45.9 present in the play, and of speech endings 79.0. The result of the cumulative testimony is that, if it were not that *Coriolanus* is, properly speaking, a problem-play—or, in other words, a play illustrative of the widespread mischief introduced alike into political, social, and individual life by inordinate class-pride—it would have stood in the Fourth Period with *Cymbeline*, *Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest*. As a problem-play its place is with *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *Lear*, *Measure for Measure*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*.

With reference to the sources whence Shakespeare drew his materials, he again obtained all his information from North's *Plutarch*. Sir Thomas North's version of Plutarch's *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans* had already supplied Shakespeare with material for several dramas, and in the play before us he has taken many of North's words and literally thrown them, as Mr. George Wyndham says with regard to the two great speeches of the play, into perfect prose and perfect verse, both being "essentially the same under their faintly yet magically varied raiment." [1]

The plot of *Coriolanus* is the story as told in Plutarch's fourth "Life," of Caius Marcius, surnamed Coriolanus. One of the proudest of the Roman patricians, he held the plebs or common people in great contempt. As a soldier he was one of the greatest in the early history of Rome. He gained

[1] *Cf.* North's *Plutarch*, edited by Mr. George Wyndham.

many battles and took many towns, of the plunder of which he would accept no part, but gave it over to his men. In the Volscian War he distinguished himself greatly, and having largely by his own efforts captured the Volscian town of Corioli, Marcius had the name "Coriolanus" conferred on him, by which he was afterwards known. Shortly after this he stood for the Consulship. The plebeians or lower order of the citizens of Rome, who hated him for his class-pride, stirred up the dregs of the people against him. The result was that Marcius was rejected for the Consulship.

He was then charged by his enemies with the intention to make himself "a tyrant," otherwise "the King of Rome," always a cry of dread to the Romans with the memories of the Tarquins ever kept alive among them. Notwithstanding his vehement repudiation of the charge, he was found guilty and sentenced to perpetual banishment. Leaving Rome, therefore, he proceeded to the territory of the Volsces, and to the town of Antium, where the great Tullus Aufidius, the Volscian general, lived, with whom Marcius when leader of the Romans had twelve times engaged in mortal combat.

Coriolanus enters the house of Aufidius, where a banquet was being prepared, given by the general to the Senate of the Volscians. Coriolanus takes up his station in the house, and will not leave at the order of the servants, who call their master. When Aufidius comes, Coriolanus declares himself and offers his services to the Volscians. These are gratefully accepted. He then marches on Rome, holding equal rank with Aufidius, and in a very short time brings the city of Rome to dire distress. Their armies are defeated and the haughty republic is compelled to sue for peace. But Marcius refuses to grant it, and demands unconditional surrender. Deputation after deputation is sent out to implore his pity, but his answer is a stern negative to all until his mother, his

wife, and his child come and kneel in entreaty before him. He cannot endure the agony of that sight; he grants the request with the cry—

> —"O my mother, mother! O!
> You have won a happy victory to Rome:
> But for your son, believe it, O, believe it,
> Most dangerously you have with him prevail'd,
> If not most mortal to him."

And his words were prophetic! Rome was saved, but at the expense of the life of Coriolanus. Aufidius, who had been jealous of his greatness and his popularity, slew him on his return to Antium, after impeaching him before the Senate. Such is the plot of *Coriolanus*.

There are only one or two characters over and above that of Coriolanus that are worthy of analysis. Of Coriolanus we feel that such a nature was scarcely human in its class-pride and utter lack of sympathy for those who belonged to the common people. True, Coriolanus had many noble qualities. He was brave almost to rashness, he was absolutely without selfishness and greed; he loved his friends with a deep and a true affection; he was pure, just, noble, and considerate to his wife and family. Yet whenever he was brought into contact with the common people, all the milk of human kindness seemed to turn to gall in him, and he became, through his class-pride, not only unjust to them, but a cruel persecutor of them. When remonstrated with, he only answered with a gibe, and when he stood for the Consulship, in place of humbly soliciting the suffrages of the people, he showed his scars and angrily demanded the office. Certainly Coriolanus was cruelly wronged, but he brought the wrongs upon himself by his inordinate and inconsiderate pride. It was, moreover, all of a piece with the hauteur of his nature that when he did not get what he wanted, and when he was banished from Rome, he should associate himself with his

country's enemies. That was not the rôle of the hero, to whom his country's honour even in banishment ought to have been ever dear. How differently the mighty Hannibal acted! We feel as we conclude the play that a man of such violent passions of pride and hate was a strength to no land—nay, that in his death he only received what he deserved. Brave though he was, his inordinate pride discounted his courage and left him vulnerable indeed.

Mr. Stopford Brooke says of Coriolanus: "Brutus [of *Julius Cæsar*] is overthrown by the rightness of his nature, Coriolanus by the wrongness of his. Rome, and not self, is first with Brutus; self, and not Rome, is first with Coriolanus. The cause of freedom is first with Brutus, and he dies for it. The cause of his own pride is first with Coriolanus, and he dies for himself. His pride and fury slay him, and he deserves his fate. . . . In relation to the people he is the type of the haughty, irresponsible feudal noble, whose only law was his own will; the plague of humanity. The people to Coriolanus are a rabble, curs, cowards not to be trusted, changing every moment. Peace makes them proud; war terrifies them. . . . Yet in his farewell to his own people he is as gentle, courteous, brave, and steady as he is the opposite to the citizens. To his own caste he is the perfect gentleman; to his mother the revering and loving son."

Hazlitt says: "Coriolanus himself is a complete character; his love of reputation, his contempt of popular opinion, his pride and modesty, are consequences of each other. His pride consists in the inflexible sternness of his will; his love of glory is a determined desire to bear down all opposition, and to extort the admiration both of friends and foes. His contempt for popular favour, his unwillingness to hear his own praises, spring from the same source. He cannot contradict the praises that are bestowed on him; therefore he is impatient of hearing them."

Finally, Gervinus says: "From his treatment of this character, we perceive that the poet elaborated it, not so much with love as with great interest. It is not exactly a pleasant but a powerful impression which we carry away from the consideration of the play, and of the character which in fact fills up the whole of it. To explain this, we must remember that not only earlier but at that time, Shakespeare's warmest sympathies rested on that unobtrusive greatness and on that plain, unexaggerated nature which he has depicted in Prince Henry and in Posthumus. As he had before contrasted his Percy with this form of character, he now did the same with Coriolanus, but far more remotely."

Of his great rival, Tullus Aufidius, but little can be said. He strives to emulate Coriolanus in generosity as he had contended with him for the mastery in arms. To him the glory of Coriolanus is gall and wormwood, and though he resigns to him the chief post alike at home and on the field, it is with a jealous determination to undermine his influence as rapidly as he can. True, it is hard for him to be second where he had formerly been first. But his country's welfare demanded it. As Gervinus says: "Tullus is naturally malicious and is flattered by the need of his enemy thus fleeing to him for protection. He forms an unnatural friendship with him, and then returns to his deceitful spite in the conspiracy against Coriolanus. He possesses the art of patient dissimulation, therefore is a dangerous friend."

Menenius Agrippa, contrariwise, who relates the famous apologue of the Belly and the Members, is a fine portrait of a true-hearted, self-denying friend. This character is an instance how marvellously Shakespeare could develop a portrait from the most elementary or rudimentary hint. If we glance at North's *Plutarch* we shall find that Shakespeare found nothing further concerning this character beyond the fable, and

the statement that "he was the pleasantest old man in the Senate." From these suggestions he has evolved the whole conception of that complex personage, who plays so large a part in the play. He is a fast friend, and defends Coriolanus with a manly whole-heartedness that is refreshing. As Gervinus says: "It is easy for him to be the unselfish admirer of Coriolanus, seeing his own talents lie in quite another direction. Age has broken his warlike strength, though his brave mind still looks out 'here and there,' when in extremity he calls the nobles to help Coriolanus, and says he could himself 'take up a brace' of the best of the plebeians. His true strength lies rather in mental superiority. His excellence is that of the clever orator."

The two Tribunes of the People, Sicinius Velutus and Junius Brutus, show as narrow a bigotry in defence of the privileges of their order as Coriolanus betrays in safeguarding the prerogatives of his. They are both finely drawn portraits of popular champions —men to whom the cause and rights of the people are all in all.

Finally, how noble are the figures of Volumnia, the mother of Coriolanus, and Virgilia his wife. The former is a lofty-minded, heroic Roman matron who would have rejoiced to see her son lying dead if he had died in defence of his country. To her, patriotism is the grandest of all religions. Virgilia, her daughter-in-law, is sweeter and softer, has more of the feminine temperament in her than the austere but noble Volumnia. No grander suppliants ever knelt before an enemy of Rome than these two ladies. Their agony, however, was all the more poignant to think that the son and the husband who till recently had been the sword and the buckler of Rome should now be its threatener. That was the chief source of their sorrow. They probably knew that death would be the portion of Coriolanus for yielding. Yet they

pressed on their appeal, for better, infinitely better, to them would be a dead son and a dead husband, whom they could praise and honour, than a living one who, as an enemy to his own fatherland, would be the object of their bitterest hatred and contempt. Death wipes out all unpleasant remembrances. Only the good remains.

With regard to Virgilia the wife and Volumnia the mother, Gervinus says: "Coriolanus is attached to his wife, whom we know to be domestic, not remarkably intellectual, not to be seduced from her work, silent, reserved, but of the most feminine sweetness. Shakespeare has given her a quiet but powerful influence over Coriolanus. To her alone he is gentle and tender; 'my gracious silence' he styles her. Volumnia is the typical Roman matron, to whom her children accorded a reverence almost amounting to worship. Therefore the sight of his mother on her knees before him, shows him, as nothing else could, how unnatural was his position towards his country. And Volumnia knew how to emphasise the force of that feeling."

Such then is *Coriolanus*, the closing tragedy of Shakespeare's dramatic life. He bade farewell to this division of his art with one of the greatest of his many great plays. Thus ended also his Third Period of productiveness.

CHAPTER X

THE INTERMEDIATE PERIOD OF THE "SONNETS"

SHAKESPEARE'S "Sonnets" have always been one of the hardest nuts given to Shakespearian criticism to crack, and almost as many theories prevail regarding their genesis, their literary and social history, their *motif*—whether autobiographic in revealing himself, biographic in manifesting facts in the life of Herbert or Southampton, or impersonal—as there are critics propounding them.

Before considering any specific theory on the subject, let us examine the sonnet as a vehicle for the expression of human emotion and passion. The origin of the sonnet may possibly be referred to the epoch when all verse was intended to be accompanied by music. On this supposition it would be evolved from the stanzaic form of a lyrical *canzone*. It has also been regarded as a union of two ancient forms of folk-song, the Sicilian *ottava* and the Tuscan *rispetto*. Be this as it may, to its present-day type of a poem of fourteen decasyllabic iambic lines, divided into the two sections of the *octave* of eight lines and the *sestet* of six, it has been developed through many intermediate forms, of which the best known are the Petrarchan or Italian, the French, the Shakespearian, and the Miltonic. Of these, the first two are perhaps the most intricate and complex, the third, the one best adapted for the expression of intense passion, while the fourth is a form favourable for the communication of majestic and stately sentiments.

The sonnet was brought to Britain by the Earl of

Surrey and Sir Thomas Wyatt. From them the succession passed to the *Hecatompathia* of Watson (1582), followed some years after by the great sonnet cycles of *Astrophel and Stella* by Sidney (1591), which set the fashion, Daniel's *Delia* (1592), Constable's *Diana* (1592), Lodge's *Phillis* (1593), Drayton's *Idea* (1594), Spenser's *Amoretti* (1595), Greville's *Cælica* (1596?).[1]

The "Sonnets" of Shakespeare, although they appeared so much later in point of date, really belonged to this epoch of sonnet-sequences. From his earliest literary years he seems to have been testing his wings in the sonnet's flight. In his earliest play, *Love's Labour's Lost*, he had introduced three excellent examples of the form; two of the exquisite choruses of *Romeo and Juliet* are also cast in sonnet form, while finally, Helena's letter in *All's Well that Ends Well* is couched in this shape.

Probably in 1593, after he had satisfied himself that his strength of pinion sufficed for a reasonably long flight, he committed himself definitely to this form of composition. That his work was known and admired is evident from the testimony of Meres in his *Palladis Tamia*. Such praise as that meted out to Shakespeare was not mere flattery. It had a solid stratum of truth beneath. "The sweet witty soul of Ovid lives in mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakespeare, witness his *Venus and Adonis*, his *Lucrece*, his sugared Sonnets among his private friends."

This fact, then, is historically recognised, that Shakespeare, from about 1594 to 1602, had been in the habit, in place of writing lengthy epistles, of sending a Sonnet containing in verse the statement of his feelings towards his most intimate friends.

That he ever took the trouble to collect these, and to weave them into a consecutive narrative of friendship or of passion is, we must admit, unsupported by the slightest iota of direct evidence. Nevertheless,

[1] *The Elizabethan Sonnet*, by S. Lee. See *An English Garner*.

on 20th May 1609, a book entitled *Shakespeare's Sonnettes* was entered on the Stationers' Register, the intimation being followed almost immediately by the publication in quarto of the volume, of which the following is the title page: *Shakespeare's* | *Sonnets* | *Never before Imprinted* | *At London* | *By G. Eld for T. T., and are* | *to be solde by William Aspley* | 1609. In a few of the copies "John Wright, dwelling at Christchurch gate," is also named as the seller. The text was well and carefully printed, whoever the supervisor of the press may have been. As regards the order of the "Sonnets," however, all was not so praiseworthy, one or two poems that had evident connection with each other being widely separated, while others, between which no immediate link could be detected, were set side by side.

No edition of any kind followed until 1640. In that year an attempt was made, in a most arbitrary way, to improve the arrangement, though the result had an effect of a precisely opposite character. Several of the "Sonnets" were omitted, to wit, Nos. 18, 19, 43, 56, 75, 76, 96, 126; others were rearranged in accordance with no definite system, but in the most haphazard style; *The Passionate Pilgrim*, as well as other poems, with by no means so good a title to be classed as Shakespeare's, were all inserted in this volume. Singularly enough, the eighteenth-century editors of the "Sonnets"—Gildon (1710), Sewell (1725), Ewing (1771), and Evans (1775)—preferred to follow this arrangement.

The question here arises, had Shakespeare ever any hand at all in the arrangement of the poems and in their revision? We have just seen that there is no direct evidence favouring this view. There are, however, one or two stray straws of indirect evidence. For example, Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps's assertion is at least probable that when the "Sonnets" were being printed in 1609, Shakespeare's company was then on

tour, and Shakespeare would certainly be with them.[1] He therefore could not superintend the arrangement of the "Sonnets" at the printing. On the other hand, there is evidence that he had at some time or other carefully revised the "Sonnets." As is well known, two of his "Sonnets," 138 and 144, had already appeared in *The Passionate Pilgrim* (1599). When issued there, the seventh and eighth lines of Sonnet 138 read—

> "I smiling, credite her false speaking toung
> Outfacing faults in Love, with love's ill rest."

In the issue of the "Sonnets" in 1609, these two lines have been changed, greatly to their improvement—

> "Simply I credit her false speaking tongue,
> On both sides thus is simple truth suppresst."

This is only one instance, but it may serve to render probable the contention that, if he did not arrange the "Sonnets," he had previously revised them.

Who then did arrange them? I think that, as regards this very vexed question, the most likely solution has been propounded by Mr. Sidney Lee in his *Life of Shakespeare*—a work which is every year becoming more appreciated for its fairness and its candour.

Mr. Lee considers that the one who is responsible for the arrangement of the "Sonnets" is the man who issued them. We are in ignorance how "Thomas Thorpe" (the "T. T." of the celebrated dedication of the "Sonnets") procured them. He may have received them from Shakespeare himself, he may have collected them from the various recipients of Shakespeare's kindly attentions, or finally, he may have purchased them from some vendor of literary properties. At all events into his hands, in some unknown

[1] Halliwell-Phillipps, *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare*, 7th edition, vol. i. p. 227.

way, one of the most valuable MS. in the whole range of literature had come.[1]

Immediately he set to work to issue it, George Eld being engaged to print it, and William Aspley and John Wright, the well-known publishers, to distribute it to the public. Thorpe, however, was anxious to let the reading public know of his share in giving to the world so priceless a literary property. Accordingly he prepared a dedicatory preface, which does not err on the side of modesty: "To the onlie begetter of these insuing Sonnets, Mr. W. H., all happinesse, and that eternitie promised by our ever-living poet, wisheth the well wishing adventurer in setting forth.—T. T."

If we "straighten out" the needless involution of style, we simply discover that "Thorpe" wishes "W. H." happiness and the eternity of good fortune always associated with every branch and every phase of the "ever-living" poet's work. Mr. Lee has made out a very strong case against Mr. W. H. having anything to do with him who before 1601 was "Mr. William Herbert," but was now, and had been since 1601, Earl of Pembroke. To style him in 1609 "Mr. W. H." would have been quite as much of a colossal blunder—though it might entail then very much more serious consequences than the analogous offence to-day—as it would were we to address the Duke of Fife as "Mr. A. Duff," or the Duke of Buccleuch as "Mr. Walter Scott." Some people seem to imagine that the refusal to admit the initials in question as referring to the Earl of Pembroke, carries with it, as a sort of implication, that Pembroke could not be the "dear friend" of Sonnet 30, whose love was dearer to Shakespeare than life itself. Although personally I maintain the identity of the Earl of Southampton with the "dear friend" in question, the strength of the case for Pembroke as that friend, is not affected in the

[1] Mr. Sidney Lee's *Life of Shakespeare*, p. 94.

slightest by his being proved to have no connection with the " Mr. W. H." of the dedication. Mr. Lee's theory that the initials refer to Mr. William Hall, a stationer's assistant of the time, is not absolutely convincing.

The real second edition of the " Sonnets " was not issued until 1709, when Lintott reprinted the first edition practically without change, and this has always been the true *textus receptus* of the " Sonnets," not the untrustworthy edition of 1640, albeit some of the eighteenth-century editors paid it such deference.

The " Sonnets " principally belong to Shakespeare's " First " literary period, when his style was inspired by lyrical ideals. That there are one or two Sonnets of a later date is probably true, but the majority of them belong to that epoch of " immaturity " when there was a distinct element of flamboyance to be traced in his work, and when rhyme, the end-stopped line, and the pause falling with measured and regular beat on the same foot, imparted that quality of monotony to his verse which is at times characteristic of the dramas of this period.[1]

The " Sonnets " tell more of Shakespeare's sensitiveness than of Shakespeare's strength (says Professor Dowden). In the earlier poems of the collection his delight in human beauty, intellect, grace, expresses itself with endless variation. Nothing seems to him more admirable than manhood. But this joy is controlled and saddened by a sense of the transitoriness of all things, the ruin of time, the inevitable progress of decay. Then gradually comes the bitter discovery, a change in love that had seemed to be made for eternity, coldness, estrangement, wrongs on both sides, and at the same time external trials and troubles arise, and the injurious life of actor and playwright—injurious to the delicate harmony and purity of the poet's nature—

[1] *Cf.* the remarks in the editions of Mr. George Wyndham and of Mr. T. Tyler.

becomes more irksome. He pathetically begs now not for love but for pity. He has learnt his lesson; his romantic attachment which attributed an impossible perfection to his friend, has become the stronger love which accepts his friend as he is.

The interpretation of the "Sonnets" has engaged the attention of a large number of Shakespearian scholars. To mention all who have thrown more or less light on the intricate problems of these wonderful poems would be impossible, but in recent times Mr. C. Armitage-Brown in *Shakespeare's Autobiographical Poems* (1838), Mr. Gerald Massey, *The Secret Drama of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, Professor Minto, Dr. Furnivall, Mr. George Wyndham, Mr. T. Tyler, Canon Beeching, Professor Herford, and Professor Dowden have one and all done yeoman service in this branch of Shakespearian study. In his excellent edition of the "Sonnets" Dowden expresses an opinion that will be largely shared by many who have devoted careful study to the "Sonnets": "With Wordsworth, Sir Henry Taylor, and Mr. Swinburne; with François Victor Hugo; with Kreyssig, Ulrici, Gervinus, and Hermann Isaac; with Boaden, Armitage-Brown, and Hallam; with Furnivall, Spalding, Rossetti, and Palgrave, I believe that Shakespeare's 'Sonnets' express his own feelings in his own person." [1]

We come now to consider the division and the grouping of the "Sonnets." We have seen that they are autobiographic; that in them Shakespeare speaks in his own person, of his own individual feelings. What, therefore, is the key to the interpretation? Alas! that can only be foreshadowed in the faintest possible manner, not explained with clearness and with confidence, in accordance with some well-recognised system of Shakespearian hermeneutics. Certain facts stand out prominently in the "Sonnets," but the interpretation of them has been lost. To whom was

[1] *See* Dowden's larger edition of *Shakspere's Sonnets.*

the " first series " of the " Sonnets " (1-126) addressed, and who was the friend to whom such an exquisite tribute was paid as is contained in Sonnet 26, between which and the dedication to *Lucrece* there is so close a resemblance? As the dedication is by name to Southampton, does not the Sonnet by implication point to the same?

" Lord of my love, to whom in vassalage
Thy merit hath my duty strongly knit,
To thee I send this written ambassage,
To witness duty, not to show my wit.
Duty so great, which wit so poor as mine
May make seem bare, in wanting words to show it;
But that I hope some good conceit of thine
In thy soul's thought, all naked, will bestow it;
Till whatsoever star that guides my moving,
Points on me graciously with fair aspect,
And puts apparel on my tattered loving,
To show me worthy of thy sweet respect:
Then may I dare to boast how I do love thee;
Till then, not show my head where thou mayst prove me."

Southampton *versus* Pembroke are the two who dispute the honour of being Shakespeare's friend. To many the above Sonnet, taken in conjunction with the dedication to *Lucrece*, solves the question in favour of Southampton.

Then the second problem is, Who was " the dark lady " to whom the " second series " of the " Sonnets " (127-152) was addressed? Was it Mary Fitton or some other Court beauty of the age? These are problems that are now for ever, it is to be feared, beyond absolute settlement. Personally, I am inclined to think it was to Mary Fitton they were addressed.

The following analysis, based to some extent on that which was drawn up by the late Dr. Furnivall in the Leopold Shakespeare, and by Mr. Thomas Tyler in his admirable volume on *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, represents a working division of the poems. Mr. George

Wyndham's erudite book on the same subject has also been laid under contribution.

SONNETS FIRST SERIES

1-26.—Treat of the beauty of Shakespeare's friend, a beauty which ought to be perpetuated in children: hence he is advised to marry. A continuous poem on Beauty and Decay.

27-32.—Written probably when Shakespeare was absent from the "friend." This Mr. Wyndham styles a continuous poem on Absence, despatched it may be in a single letter, since it opens with a formal address. The misery of separation is the theme.

33-42.—The "friend" has wronged him by stealing his mistress. He has, however, expressed sorrow, and the ill deed is ransomed by tears. Still the "friend" keeps his mistress, but his love for his "friend" condones and overlooks all.

43-55.—Laments over absence. Shakespeare promises his friend immortality in his verse.

56-65.—Shakespeare remonstrates with his friend on the seeming estrangement between them. He declares that the wits of old days had many worse themes for their verse than his friend's beauty; laments love in absence and pictures the lives of men like the waves of the sea. The poet is sleepless through affection; Shakespeare's love of self is love for his friend who is his second self. Again his friend is promised immortality in his (Shakespeare's) verse. Melancholy fills the poet's mind as he contemplates separation.

66-74.—Sonnets pervaded by melancholy: Shakespeare's "friend" has fallen into bad company: discourses of his own death and of his love that bridges death's chasm.

75-77.—His verse may seem monotonous through always harping on his love for his friend, but it is the sole theme that interests him; the use of a mirror, a dial, and a book.

78-87.—Deals with rival poets, their jealousies and meretricious art, especially with one poet who by the "proud full sail of his great verse" has robbed the writer of his friend's admiration; in No. 87 Shakespeare takes farewell of his friend.

88-96.—The friend estranged, or Shakespeare fancies he is: the poet suggests that his friend is being corrupted by evil associates. The theme of estrangement is handled with power and with pathos.

97-99.—Sonnets composed by Shakespeare to win back his friend's love, but seemingly without success.

100-126.—Best regarded as a single poem, written on the poet being reconciled to his friend after a lengthy separation: the poet asserts that his love for his friend is stronger than before, and takes on himself the blame of separation. The apology for past silence is exquisitely sweet: the

SONNETS

FIRST SERIES

verse ever and anon climbs the loftiest steeps of lyric and dramatic inspiration. The poet takes a retrospect of his love and of all that had contributed to make it sweet. He refers to a scandal from which he was suffering and which plunged him into gloom. He then feels and expresses the degradation of the actor's calling, whence the scandal seems to have arisen, and takes farewell of his friend. The series closes.

SECOND SERIES

127-152.—Deals with the mystery of Shakespeare's connection with "the dark lady." He loves her deeply in spite of her infidelity to him, and he comments on the wrong she does him. He ranges over the entire gamut of the emotions when describing his relations with her—now soft and sweet, anon harsh, sarcastic, and condemnatory of her, of whom he writes—

> "For I have sworn thee fair and thought thee bright
> Who art as black as hell, as dark as night."

Such then are the leading problems embedded in these marvellous poems, whereof the more one reads the deeper is his admiration of that myriad-minded man whose work they are. They are a microcosm in themselves, because in them we find a keen yet a correct picture of that greater world without of whose infinite interests they are the reflection. They are not easy to read because the verse is so thought-laden, yet they are seldom obscure like the kindred work of Lord Brooke. He who masters the "Sonnets," alike in their scheme and in their sentiments, gains a view of Shakespeare's mind and art which, as Professor Dowden says, can be obtained from no other of his works.

CHAPTER XI

SHAKESPEARE'S LIFE FROM 1610 TO 1616

THE life of Shakespeare had six years yet to run. When we consider that his working career only embraced a little over five-and-twenty years—stretching the two terminal dates to their furthest points of distance—one stands amazed alike at the fecundity and the facility of the man's imagination and execution. Lope de Vega has been cited as an instance of even greater ease in composition. To compare the two is to place Pelion on Ossa beside a wart. Two of Shakespeare's later comedies or one of his mighty Problem-Plays would furnish forth as much imagination as is present in all the Spanish dramatist's feebly-fluent plays. The mere facility is not to be taken into account. It is the high average excellence in all Shakespeare did that must be considered as well, for the least of the plays passing under his name would have established the fame of any of his contemporaries. Shakespeare, however, was seemingly never satisfied with his own achievements. The ideal he kept before him was high, amazingly high—so high, in fact, that, even he, had not attained it in his greatest plays. That such was so, is our gain to-day, as it is indeed the martyrdom of all art never to realise its own perfection, but to see the Delectable Mountains of its ideal always "afar off."

The year 1610 was the beginning of that period of "Restful Contemplation" which he enjoyed before the end came. The tongue of scandal was silenced. The cloud of misunderstanding and alienation which had dimmed the sunshine of his friendship with

Southampton had passed away, and their intimacy was now closer than ever. The darkly suspicious mood also, which had led him to question the aims and the motives of those around him—induced thereto, probably, by the slanders to which he had been exposed and the alienation thereby entailed on the part of dear friends—had also melted away, after he had fought and won the battle for the Sovereignty of Self-Control—whether he or the Demon of Depression was to be the master-planner of his life's remaining years. The gloom had gone, but its lessons remained.

The words of Hallam, to which reference has already been made, did not overstate the case regarding this epoch of gloom: "There seems to have been a period in Shakespeare's life when his heart was ill at ease and ill-content with the world or his own conscience; the memory of hours misspent, the pang of affection misplaced or unrequited, the experience of man's worser nature which intercourse with unworthy associates by choice or circumstance peculiarly teaches—these, as they sank down into the depths of his great mind, seem not only to have inspired into it the conception of *Lear* and *Timon*, but that of one primary character—the censurer of mankind."[1]

This frame of mind, though it could inspire Shakespeare, eager to find relief and release from the torture of self-accusation, to analyse the "why" and the "wherefore" of those moral and spiritual lapses which so often afflict the noblest of men, yet, by the sheer intensity of the intellectual effort demanded, consumed a much larger amount of the vital fuel of being than did either the Comedies or the Histories. What George Eliot said of the composition of *Romola*, may be applied to Shakespeare's creation of the tragic figures of the "Period of Maturity": "I began it young, I finished it an old woman."

[1] *Literature of Europe*, pt. iii. chap. vi. § 42.

In the year 1610 Shakespeare seems to have been playing along with the "King's Company" in the Blackfriars Theatre, in place of the Globe, and in the summer of this year *Cymbeline* appears to have been produced. Several of Shakespeare's friends were in evidence this year, among others Samuel Daniel with the drama *Tethy's Festival*, Camden with his *Britannia* now translated into English by Philemon Holland, Giles Fletcher with his noble religious poem, *Christ's Victory*, while John Heath of New College, Oxford, published his *Epigrams*, in which there was a stanza upon "Tobacco" much praised by James I., who also had issued a "Counterblast" against the weed, though Heath's scarcely comes under this category—

> "We buy the driest wood that we can find,
> And willingly would leave the smoke behind;
> But in tobacco a thwart course we take,
> Buying the herb only for the smoke's sake."

In that year also Francis Bacon issued his excellent treatise of *The Wisdom of the Ancients*, which to-day holds its place as one of the most popular of Bacon's works.

Silvester Jourdain published an interesting account of travel entitled, *A Discoverie of the Barmudas, otherwise called the Isle of Devils: by Sir Thomas Gates, Sir George Sommers and Captayne Newport and divers others*, a pamphlet certainly used by Shakespeare in connection with *The Tempest*.

In the April of this year Henry Hudson, the navigator, setting sail from London in his vessel called the *Discovery*, discovered and explored the bay in North America that bears his name, but while there was turned adrift in an open boat with his son and seven infirm seamen by a mutinous crew, and was never heard of again.

We should also recall with pride that on the 19th of

July the foundation stone of a proper building for the Bodleian Library at Oxford was laid.

Shakespeare, in the April of this year, had still further added to his property at Stratford by purchasing twenty acres of land from William and John Combe, from whom in 1602 he had already bought 107 acres.

John Davies of Hereford, who, in 1603, in his *Microcosmus* had previously referred in flattering terms to Shakespeare and Burbage, now in 1610, in his *Scourge of Folly*, consisting of satirical Epigrams and other poems in honour of many noble and worthy persons of our land, addressed a series of verses to "Our English Terence, Mr. Will Shakespeare"—

> "Some say, good Will, which I in sport do sing,
> Hadst thou not play'd some kingly parts in sport,
> Thou hadst been a companion for a king,
> And been a king among the meaner sort;
> Some others rail; but rail as they think fit,
> Thou hast no railing, but a reigning wit,
> And honesty thou sow'st which they do reap
> So to increase their stock which they do keep."

The year 1611 seems to have been the last which Shakespeare spent in connection with the theatre. Probably after the Lent of that year, he bade farewell to the kingdom of the stage, wherein he had ruled so long. At all events tradition, which generally has some basis for its statement, asserted that Shakespeare that year retired to Stratford and took up his residence in New Place. This appears to harmonise with the remark of Malone, who asserted that *The Tempest* belonged to the year 1611. It has generally been regarded as the latest of Shakespeare's plays, and all the facts in connection with it, both internal and external, confirm the statement. After it had been produced he had nothing to detain him, and doubtless he longed to be back amid the scenes of his boyhood, to spend life's evening at the spot where its morning had dawned.

Mr. Sidney Lee thinks that in 1611, Shakespeare

disposed of all his Globe and Blackfriars shares. He certainly owned none at the date of his death, five years later. In September of this year his name appears on the margin of a list of contributors (all leading residents of Stratford) to a fund which was raised for defraying the expense "of prosecuting the bill in Parliament for the better repair of the highways."

This year, on 15th May, Dr. Forman, the astrologer and quack, records in his Diary that he had witnessed a representation of *A Winter's Tale* at the Globe Theatre. The performance must have been one of the early representations of the play soon after its production. Opinion is pretty unanimous that the date of its first appearance on the boards of either the Globe or the Blackfriars must have been 1611.

The printing of Ben Jonson's *Catiline* is usually assigned to this year, also that of Ludovic Barry's comedy of *Ram Alley*, and of Thomas Heywood's historical play, *The Golden Age*. Among the pieces, both played and printed this year, was the drama written by Middleton and Dekker entitled *The Roaring Girl*, being a comedy descriptive of the deeds of a lawless female cutpurse called Moll Frith, but better known as "Moll Cutpurse" or "English Moll." Among Dekker's *Works* her portrait stands on the frontispiece of the play.[1]

Shakespeare's interests now lie largely in Stratford, and he becomes closely identified with all its municipal and commercial life. What were the reasons leading him, at the age of forty-seven, to forsake the stage at the very height of his fame, and when, humanly speaking, there seemed many years of work before him, cannot now even be guessed. Many conjectures, both wild and wanton, have been hazarded to explain the enigma, from reconciliation with his wife—from whom he never had been alienated—to the Puritanic influence of his son-in-law, Hall, who detested the stage and all

[1] *Cf.* Dekker's *Works*, Pearson's edition.

its works. The true cause probably lay in the gradual weakening of his constitution. The enormous intellectual strain of the preceding seven years would be sufficient to age any man, and Shakespeare at forty-seven was probably as feeble as another man at sixty!

The state of his health, however, did not prevent him making many journeys to London to superintend his interests there. His plays were always selected for Court representation, and on such occasions the author, if possible, would be present. In May 1613, during the festivities consequent upon the marriage of the Princess Elizabeth, Heminge, his former fellow and comrade, produced at Court no fewer than seven of his plays, viz., *Much Ado about Nothing*, *The Tempest*, *Winter's Tale*, *Sir John Falstaff* (*Merry Wives*), *Othello*, *Julius Cæsar*, and *Hotspur* (presumably 1 *Henry IV.*).

Then in May 1612 he had to be in London over the lawsuit *Stephan Bellott, Complainant* v. *Christopher Mountjoye, Defendant*, when possibly he might stay with his friend and old collaborator, George Wilkins, at his inn in the parish of St. Sepulchre's, to be near his other "friends and fellows."

In the following year, 1613, Richard, the third brother of the poet, died at Stratford, and was interred in the parish church. Then on 13th July of the same year, Mrs. Hall (Susanna Shakespeare) brought a suit against a man named Lane for a foul slander against her good name, in affirming that she had illicit relations with one Ralph Smith. The defendant showed the falsity of the story by decamping and declining to appear in court. He was excommunicated for his conduct. Interesting it is to know that Shakespeare stood by his daughter all through that anxious time. Curiously enough, there is not a word of her husband, the Puritanic Dr. Hall, doing the same.

In the March of that year, Shakespeare when in London invested some money in real estate—a shop and house with yard attached, near the Blackfriars

Theatre. The deeds of this transaction are now in the British Museum.

In the spring of the year 1614 Shakespeare, singularly enough, is found entertaining at New Place a Puritan preacher, who seems to have had a fine taste in wines, and in July of the same year, John Combe, the wealthy landowner of Stratford, died, leaving Shakespeare £5. Combe's heir, his nephew William, in conjunction with another landowner in the neighbourhood, Arthur Mannering, steward of Lord Chancellor Ellesmere (who by virtue of his office was lord of the manor), made an attempt to enclose the "common lands" at Welcombe, which belonged to the Corporation of Stratford. The Corporation determined to fight the matter to the last, and Shakespeare, who was interested in a dual way by owning the freehold of 106 acres at Welcombe, and by being joint owner of the tithes of Bishopton, Welcombe, and Old Stratford, was appealed to by the Town Council to "stand in." Shakespeare, however, secured himself by obtaining a note of indemnification from Combe's agent in the event of any damage accruing to him or to his fellow-owner, Greene, the Town Clerk, a kinsman of his own. The Corporation implored Shakespeare to help them, and his kinsman Greene drew up a statement of the inconveniences the Corporation would sustain were the lands enclosed. Shakespeare's reply has been misread into a statement of sympathy with the Corporation's plea. But the very opposite conclusion is the correct one. The entry runs in the Town Clerk's memoranda-book or diary as follows: "Sept.—Mr. Shakespeare tellyng J. Greene that I was not able to beare the encloseing of Welcombe." The first personal pronoun was thought to refer to Shakespeare himself. There were, however, two Greenes involved, J. Greene and Thomas Greene, and the true reading is that Shakespeare told J. Greene that the writer of the diary, Thomas Greene, was not able to bear the

enclosure.[1] The attempt did not succeed, however, and the lands remained unenclosed. The reason why Shakespeare did not support the Corporation on this occasion, may have been due to a very stupid insult which they, either wittingly or unwittingly, had perpetrated about two years before. Notwithstanding all the benefits they had received from Shakespeare, the Town Council, which was strongly Puritanic in sympathies, passed a resolution on 7th February 1612 that stage-plays were unlawful, and that the sufferance of them was against the orders heretofore made, and also against the example of other well-governed cities and boroughs. The Council was therefore content that the "penaltie of x s (ten shillings) imposed on players heretofore, be xli henceforward."[2] How could a man, who had been so grossly insulted, be expected to overlook the offence and lend his help cheerfully and gladly a few months later to extricate the Council from a difficulty? Shakespeare was only human, and doubtless he felt deeply the slight thus put upon his profession, even although in the "Sonnets"[3] he had spoken of it with loathing.

Doubtless Shakespeare had realised for some years that the enormous intellectual strain to which he had subjected his mind must exact compensation in shortened lease of life. His health seems to have shown signs of failing a year or two before the end came. He felt himself unable to finish the dramas on *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, *Henry VIII.*, and *Cardenio*. They were therefore handed over for completion to his young collaborateur, whose style so nearly resembled his own—John Fletcher. It was while the drama of *Henry VIII.* was being enacted at the Globe Theatre

[1] *Cf.* the whole case at length in *Shakespeare and the Enclosure of the Common Fields at Welcombe*, edited by Dr. C. M. Ingleby; and the case condensed in Sidney Lee's *Life of Shakespeare*.

[2] *See* Mr. Sidney Lee's *Stratford upon Avon*, p. 270.

[3] *Cf.* Sonnet 111—

"O, for my sake do you with fortune chide."

in June 1613, that some of the lighted wadding from the discharge of the cannons at the entrance of the King lodged in the roof and occasioned the burning down of the theatre. Doubtless many of the MSS. of Shakespeare's plays were consumed in this lamentable disaster. The three plays were all completed by Fletcher with great ability, but *Cardenio* has been lost, so we cannot have the opportunity of noting how Shakespeare mapped out a drama on the romantic story of the lovers in *Don Quixote*. He has only one Spanish character in the whole range of his dramas, Spain at that time being to Englishmen the Abode of Apollyon.

In the beginning of 1616, Shakespeare seemed suddenly to realise that his term of existence on earth might be even shorter than he dreamed of. In January he ordered his lawyer, Francis Collins, of Warwick, to prepare his will. The attorney did so, and seemingly must have attended to complete the transaction. Whether the document was unsatisfactory or insufficient, we have now no means of knowing, but one thing is certain, it was laid aside.

Meantime, the heart of the poet was to be gladdened ere he died, by seeing Judith, the younger of his two daughters, given in marriage to Thomas Quiney, the son of his old friend and correspondent, Richard Quiney. They were married on 10th February at Stratford Parish Church, the ceremony was performed without public asking of the banns, an offence in the eye of ecclesiastical law for which a fine was exacted by the diocesan court at Worcester.

Thereafter, says tradition, Ben Jonson and Michael Drayton, Shakespeare's nearest and dearest friends, hearing of his illness, came to see him. Whether the enfeebled constitution was unable to stand the strain of some consequent conviviality, or whether an epidemic was raging at the time, is unknown, but Shakespeare's death occurred soon after the visit of

the two friends. Whether, therefore, that statement of the Rev. John Ward (Vicar of Stratford about 1760), regarding "the merry meeting" is true, or whether death resulted from a gradual breaking up of the system, is now unknown, but when danger was apprehended, Shakespeare at once, with that calm prevision that always characterised him, sent for the lawyer and saw to it that his "last will and testament" was carefully signed and witnessed. Then at peace with God and man, on Tuesday, 23rd April 1616, the great spirit passed away, being interred on the Thursday following, 25th April (O.S.), within Stratford Church, near the north wall of the chancel, in which (as Mr. Lee says) he had a right of burial as part owner of the tithes, and consequently one of the lay rectors. Over Shakespeare's tomb these lines were inscribed—

> "Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbeare
> To dig the dust enclosèd here.
> Bleste be the man that spares these stones,
> And curst be he that moves my bones"—

and the dread of Shakespeare's curse has kept his grave inviolate from then till now!

CHAPTER XII

SHAKESPEARE'S FOURTH OR FINAL PERIOD—THE PERIOD OF ROMANCE AND OF RESTFUL CONTEMPLATION

SECTION I.—CHARACTER OF THE PERIOD

WE come now to Shakespeare's Fourth Period, that of Romance and of Restful Contemplation after the storm and stress of the Problem-Plays. To the romantic themes of his first epoch, to the portrayal of love which having been alienated by untoward circumstances is now reconciled and rendered happy, he returned. The struggles and conflicts of the vast elemental passions and emotions, the interplay of opposing desires, and the effect of weakness of will on the moral fibre of man's being, were all left behind him. He had faced the spectres of his own doubts and fears, ethical and intellectual, and although the self-conflict had been deadly, at times almost threatening his own moral self-control, he had returned the conqueror, in a campaign all the more terrific because its warfare was unseen.

Now when he had entered into his ethical heritage —the Kingship of Self-Control—a great peace fell upon his spirit, the peace that comes of the consciousness of duty well and worthily done, and of triumph justly gained.

The Fourth Period lasted from 1610 to 1611, and included only the three plays, *Cymbeline*, *Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest*, with the three that were completed by Fletcher, *Henry VIII.*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, and perhaps the lost play of *Cardenio*.

The characteristics of the Fourth Period are the

lofty idealism which pervades the plays, the frequency wherewith feminine endings occur, also light and weak endings; the verse has a subtle music all its own, through the shifting of the pause in conformity with the variation of the thought. Professor Herford aptly states the case when he speaks of the subtle rhythmic instinct of Shakespeare's later maturity, which disintegrates the line in order to build up the richer music of the paragraph.

Professor Dowden also very beautifully says: "Over the beauty of youth and the love of youth there is shed in those plays of Shakespeare's final period a clear yet tender luminousness, not elsewhere to be perceived in his writings. In his earlier plays, Shakespeare writes concerning young men and maidens, their loves, their mirth, their griefs, as one who is among them, who has a lively personal interest in their concerns, who can make merry with them, treat them familiarly and, if need be, can mock them into good sense. But in his latest plays there is a beautiful pathetic light always present; in each of these plays we can see Shakespeare as it were tenderly bending over the joys and sorrows of youth. In these latest plays, too, the sympathetic reader can discern unmistakably a certain abandonment of the common joy of the world, a certain remoteness from the usual pleasures and sadnesses of life, and at the same time all the more, this tender bending over those who are like children still absorbed in their individual joys and sorrows."

Professor Spencer Baynes says in his essay on Shakespeare in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (tenth edition): "In the dramas belonging to Shakespeare's last period, or rather those which may be said to close his dramatic career, a feeling of severe but consolatory calm is apparent. If the deeper discords of life are not finally resolved, the virtues which soothe their perplexities and give us courage and endurance to wait,

as well as confidence to trust the final issues—the virtues of forgiveness and generosity, of forbearance and self-control, are largely illustrated."

SECTION 2.—CYMBELINE. 1610

The first play in the Fourth Period is *Cymbeline*, the story of reunited family affection. It may probably have some connection with the longing Shakespeare doubtless felt for the reunion of his own family circle under the roof of his Stratford home.

This play has always been a favourite. Hazlitt remarks of it: "*Cymbeline* is one of the most delightful of Shakespeare's historical plays. It may be considered as a dramatic romance, in which the most striking parts of the story are thrown into the form of a dialogue, and the intermediate circumstances are explained by the different speakers, as occasion renders necessary. The action is less concentrated in consequence, but the interest becomes more aerial and refined from the principle of perspective introduced into the subject, by the imaginary changes of scene, as well as by the length of time it occupies."

Ulrici states: "Heminge and Condell classed *Cymbeline* among the tragedies, but it is even less a tragedy than *Measure for Measure* is a comedy. In spite of the seriousness which pervades the whole, in spite of the character of the action, which everywhere borders on the tragic, and in spite of the complete—and in Shakespeare striking—exclusion of every comic element, *Cymbeline* cannot be called a tragedy, not so much on account of the happy issue of the action, as because it has no tragic plot, no tragic pathos, and no tragic catastrophe—in short, the drama is not worked out in a tragic manner." [1]

The date of composition is 1609-10, but preferably 1610, though no evidence exists as a guide. The date

[1] *Shakespeare's Dramatic Art.*

of its first publication was the Folio of 1623. It there stood the last play in the volume. The drama has always suffered from a species of neglect of which it is quite unworthy. Perhaps the fact that it was never performed at any of the royal celebrations, and that, with the exception of the single Court performance in 1633, there is scarcely a mention of it before the Restoration, may in a measure account for that. After the Restoration it was "adapted" by Thomas Huffey, but the adaptation was utterly inept, and he dared to make Imogen stoop to impurity. For such an offence he is justly crucified into everlasting contempt. To Coleridge its beauty recommended it when composing his *Zapolya*.

Some critics would date *Cymbeline* in the same year with *Lear* and *Macbeth*, on the simple ground that all three plots are to be found in Holinshed. As soon might we unite *Pericles* and the *Comedy of Errors* because both of them mention Ephesus. At the same time, it must be admitted that there are analogies of language which connect *Cymbeline* and *Macbeth*, as for instance the references to the innocence of sleep in *Cymbeline*, II. ii. 12-33, and in *Macbeth*, II. ii. 21-42. There are also links connecting *Cymbeline* with the *Winter's Tale*, with *The Tempest*, and with *Pericles*. With these it forms a sub-department of Shakespeare's works entitled "Romances." *Cymbeline* certainly preceded the *Winter's Tale* as the latter in turn preceded *The Tempest*, but all of them were probably composed within the space of eighteen months.

The scene of the play is Britain and Rome, while the Time-Analysis of the stage action of the play gives its duration at twelve days with intervals, distributed as follows—

Day	I.	embracing	Act	I.	Sc. i.-iii.; Interval.
,,	II.	,,	,,	I.	,, iv.; ,,
,,	III.	,,	,,	I.	,, v.-vi.; II. i.-ii. (part).
,,	IV.	,,	,,	II.	,, ii. (part), iii.; [III. i.]; Interval.

Day						
	V. embracing	Act	II.	„	iv.-v.;	Interval [III. i.]
VI.	„	„	III.	„	ii.-iii.;	„
VII.	„	„	III.	„	iv.;	„
VIII.	„	„	III.	„	v.-vii.;	„
IX.	„	„	IV.	„	i.-ii.;	„
X.	„	„	IV.	„	iii.	
XI.	„	„	IV.	„	iv.	
XII.	„	„	V.	„	i.-v.	

The metrical tests as applied to the play furnish the following data for arriving at a conclusion upon the probable date of the drama. The total length of it is 3448 lines, of which 638 lines are in prose and 2585 in blank verse of the type known as "Fourth Period Pentameter." It is characterised by subtle changes of the mid-line pause, the thought is sublimely poetic yet marvellously profound, being cunningly interwoven with the sound, the halo of imaginative grace is over all, while the technical part of the drama reveals great freedom and easy movement in the structure of the verse. There are 107 pentametric rhymes in the play, the total percentage of rhyme also being 3.2 per cent. Feminine endings register a percentage of 30.7, light endings and weak endings numbering 78 of the former and 52 of the latter respectively. Enjambed lines continue to increase in number, 46.0 being the percentage attained. The last test, viz. the speech endings, shows a great increase, 85 per cent. occurring in *Cymbeline*, as against 79 per cent. and 77 per cent. for *Coriolanus* and *Antony and Cleopatra*. Of the metrical testimony in its cumulative verdict, the result is that *Cymbeline* in date should stand immediately beside *Coriolanus*, and slightly anterior to *A Winter's Tale*, though if we regard light and weak endings alone *Cymbeline* should stand last.[1]

The sources whence Shakespeare drew the materials for the drama were Holinshed's *Chronicles of England* (Bk. iii. chaps. xiii.-xviii.), but the information lies on

[1] *Cf.* König and Sidney Walker, also Ingram.

pages often far apart. Cymbeline in the history is a wise and peaceful prince who remains on good terms with the Romans. It was his son Guiderius who revolted. Spenser follows Holinshed, stating in the *Faery Queen* (II. x. 50) that Cymbeline refused to pay the tribute. This statement, of course, is incorrect. The name Imogen is found in Holinshed, but Shakespeare had probably met with some name approximating to it when writing *Much Ado about Nothing*, for in one of the stage directions we read, "Enter Leonato, Governor of Messina, Imogen his wife," etc. Possibly from this germ the name had arisen.

So much for the name. The story of Imogen was derived from the *Decameron* of Boccaccio (Ninth Story of the Second Day), which relates how Bernabo of Genoa, duped by Ambrogiuolo, a merchant of Piacenza, loses his goods and commandeth that his innocent wife be put to death. She escapeth and serveth the Soldan in a man's habit. Here she lighteth upon the deceiver of her husband, and bringeth the latter to Alexandria, where her traducer being punished, she resumeth woman's apparel and returneth with her husband rich alike in wealth and reputation. There were, however, other renderings of the trunk episode, whereby a woman's honour was sworn away by a man gaining access to her chamber while she slept and noting details of her person, which led her husband to think he had been betrayed. The *Romance of the Violet*, by Gilbert de Montreuil, a French form of the story, is probably the origin of the *Decameron* version, and of this also Shakespeare may perhaps have heard, while through some translation of the German and Scandinavian variants of the story, entitled *The Four Merchants, or the Virtuous Wife*,[1] he may have been able to introduce some of the details which are not found in Boccaccio's rendering of the story.

[1] Not known to be translated into English until 1620 in the tract *Westward for Smelts*.

There are, moreover, two or three threads of the plot which are as yet unaccounted for. Whence did Shakespeare draw the following circumstances, which do not appear in Holinshed nor in Boccaccio? (1) The Queen-stepmother, with her deep interest in poisonous herbs—a knowledge which, by the help of Cornelius the doctor, she designs to use in removing Imogen; (2) the theft of the two young princes by Belarius or Morgan, with the life they live—the free life of men of the woods; (3) how Fidele, otherwise Imogen, fleeing from the Court, appears to them disguised as a boy, acts as their cook, and is poisoned by the unguents from the Queen, but not fatally—all these cannot be identified with any known source, unless in a folk-tale, still one of the most popular of nursery stories, *Little Snow-White*.[1] Though it comes to us from the German, it has been so long domiciled amongst us that we may fairly claim it as English. (*See* Professor Gollancz's sympathetic Introduction to the play in the Larger Temple Shakespeare.)

In the discussion of the sources we have so fully sketched the various threads of plot that a few words will suffice to give the reader an idea of what it treats.

Imogen, the daughter of Cymbeline, the King of Britain, by a former wife, has been secretly married to Posthumus, a Roman gentleman of high character. The present Queen of Cymbeline had sought to obtain the throne for Cloten, her boorish son by a former marriage, by promoting a marriage between him and Imogen. Her marriage with Posthumus, and her refusal to accept any release, leaves the Queen only one other alternative, the murder of Imogen. This she plans to effect. Meantime her bestial-minded son had fallen in love with the Princess, and seeks to possess her at all costs. Cymbeline had previously lost in a mysterious manner his two sons, the brothers of Imogen by his former Queen, they having been stolen

[1] *See* Mr. Andrew Lang's *Blue Fairy Book*.

from the palace. Cymbeline was therefore anxious to promote the marriage of Cloten with Imogen. The intimation by the latter that she was already wedded to Posthumus renders the King exceedingly wroth, for thereby all his plans were upset. Posthumus Leonatus, who had been reared by Cymbeline from early childhood, though beloved by the King, was not intended for his daughter, and therefore the announcement that the lady and he had taken the law into their own hands and married, changed Cymbeline's love to hate. Posthumus is at once banished, and ordered never to show his face at Court on pain of death. The Queen-stepmother, who hates Imogen but professes to be her friend, advises her to enjoy a farewell meeting with Posthumus, but while husband and wife are so engaged she brings Cymbeline on the scene. Posthumus has only time to slip a bracelet on to her arm as the memorial manacle of love, ere the King orders them to separate and Posthumus to depart at once.

From these initial facts the drama is developed along three distinct lines. (1) The Posthumus-Imogen thread. Posthumus goes to Rome, and while there, in the house of his friend Philario, meets Iachimo. Posthumus is full of the sorrow of separation, and he extols his absent mistress. Iachimo contends that every jewel has some flaw, and offers to wager him that he will find means to seduce Imogen. Posthumus indignantly scouts the possibility of such a thing, and wagers his valuable diamond ring against Iachimo's ten thousand ducats. Iachimo proceeds to Britain, finds Imogen so absolutely pure that his very attempts on her honour are scarce understood by her. He therefore proceeds to fraud. He begs Imogen to take charge, for a single night, of a trunk for him in which he has some rare jewels that he would not like lost. She pledges her honour for their safety. That night Iachimo, enclosed in the trunk, is carried

into her bed-chamber. When she is asleep, he comes out, notes the features of her room, the mole she has on her left breast, and then slips off her arm the bracelet which Posthumus had placed thereon; that done, he re-enters the trunk and is carried back on board ship.

On returning to Rome, he shows Posthumus the bracelet and tells him what he had seen on Imogen's breast. Posthumus believes Imogen to be guilty, and announces his intention of returning to Britain to kill her. He does return, writes her a secret letter to come to meet him at Milford Haven, while to Pisanio, his servant, he sends orders to kill her when she arrives. Pisanio, overcome by pity, shows her the letter in which Posthumus accuses her of sinning, and when she fain would have killed herself in anguish of mind, advises her to proceed to Milford Haven, and, in disguise, try to obtain access to Posthumus through Lucius, the Roman ambassador. They then part, Pisanio to return to Court lest he should be missed.

The second thread of plot now begins to unwind itself. The Queen-stepmother, anxious to clear the way to the throne for her son, has summoned the Court doctor, Cornelius, to a consultation on poisons, which are professedly to be used on dogs and cats. Cornelius does not trust her, and when she asks for a drug fitted painlessly to kill animals, gives her one that will merely produce sleep. This is made up in a box, and she asks Pisanio to find means to give it to Imogen as a specific against sea-sickness. Ere he leaves her on the road to Milford Haven, therefore, he innocently puts the box into Imogen's hand, giving her also with it the Queen's message.

The third thread is now taken up. On Pisanio's return to Court, Cloten meets him and wrests from him the secret of Imogen's flight. The Prince at once determines to follow her, but dresses himself in a suit belonging to Posthumus, that Imogen may imagine it is her husband who is approaching.

Meantime Imogen in boy's clothes has come near the cave in Wales, to which Morgan, or, as he calls himself, Belarius, had taken Cymbeline's sons twenty years before. The lads had grown up to be splendid specimens of manhood, Guiderius passing under the name of Polydore, and Arviragus of Cadwal. Imogen is kindly received by them, and she agrees under the name of Fidele to stay with them and to act as their cook. Cloten had followed Imogen, and meets Guiderius, who slays him and brings his head back with him. Meantime Imogen, feeling sick, had taken the Queen's medicine, and falls into a death-like swoon. Overwhelmed with sorrow, her new friends lay her out for death and place Cloten dressed in the clothing of Posthumus beside her. Presently she awakes from sleep, sees as she thinks the headless body of Posthumus beside her, and swoons. She is found lying senseless across the headless corpse by Lucius, the Roman ambassador.

Posthumus, who had come with Lucius to fight against the Britons, on receiving Pisanio's false report that he had executed his orders and slain Imogen, is stricken with remorse. To the high gods, he determines to devote his life as an expiatory sacrifice, and to die while fighting on the side of the Britons against the Romans, whereby he ensured death for treason if captured by the Romans. The battle begins, and for a time the Roman discipline carries all before it. Posthumus, however, in single combat overcomes Iachimo. The Britons are being defeated, and Cymbeline is captured, when suddenly Belarius, Guiderius, Arviragus, and Posthumus come to the rescue and turn the tide of the day's fortunes into the rout of the Romans. Iachimo was then wearing the diamond ring he had won from Posthumus. The ring was recognised by Imogen, at whose prompting Cymbeline compels him to disclose whence he obtained it. Thereupon the whole terrible network of deceit wherein

had been entangled and overwhelmed so many noble hearts was laid bare. Belarius then presents to Cymbeline the two lads who had done so much to win the day as his own sons and Imogen's brothers. Imogen herself is reunited to Posthumus; the Roman general, Lucius, is released, and Cymbeline, though victor for the time being, is so convinced of the hopelessness of struggling against the Roman Empire, that he submits to its power, and agrees to resume the payment of tribute. In this way peace is restored exactly as had been foretold by the soothsayer.

The characters, one and all, are cast in a heroic mould. They are all of a romantic type, and none of Shakespeare's plays has so many individuals of first-rate excellence among its *dramatis personæ*. Curiously enough, the strongest are those of second-rate moment in the play, such as Arviragus, Guiderius, and Belarius. Cymbeline himself is the weakest of the company. Shakespeare evidently desired to make a noble character out of Posthumus, therefore he must beware of overshadowing him by the King. The latter, then, is portrayed as a man who scarcely knows his own mind, being given to frequent and sudden changes for which he can give no satisfactory reason beyond "I will it so." For slaying the brutal Cloten, he would rashly have condemned to death the noble youth Guiderius, to whom he owed the victory, although he knew Cloten had intended to violate Imogen—nay, he would have sent him to execution, had Belarius not declared that he was about to order the death of his own son, when he as abruptly cancelled the thoughtless command.

A well-known German critic styles Cymbeline "that weak King, without self-reliance, the image of a subordinate character, the sport of every good or bad influence, tossed about by every temptation or suggestion, bent by every wind, but not like the tree at the same time strengthened; a mere cipher receiving

value only from the higher or lower figure placed before it."

The Queen, Imogen's stepmother, is a subtle study of a thoroughly heartless woman, who considered no act a crime whereby she was able to accomplish her own ends. To her also no interests were worthy of consideration beside those of her own. Cloten represented in her idea all that was eligible in a husband, and for Imogen to prefer Posthumus to him was not only foolish, it was criminal, seeing that Cloten had graciously signified his satisfaction with her. No other question needed to be considered, in her opinion, and when she found that Imogen not only was married but refused to break through the bond with Posthumus, why then she must simply be killed that there might be an end on't. Hazlitt speaks of her incorrigible wickedness, yet of that snake-like power of fascination which provoked the blind uxorious confidence of Cymbeline. She was glaringly hypocritical, so much so that she laid herself open to reproof, for in her interview with Cornelius, the physician, when the Queen attempts to disguise from him, her true motives for procuring the poison by saying to him that she meant to try its effects on " creatures not worth the hanging," his answer conveys at once a tacit reproof of her hypocrisy, and a useful lesson of humanity, " Your highness shall from this practice but make hard your heart."

Cloten is a character that excites utter detestation. In the earlier scenes of the play he appears as a coward, who shrinks from warlike exercises and all martial enterprises, on pretence that his high rank prevents him fighting with any one, while the opinion entertained of him by the courtiers is that " he is a thing too bad for bad report; " in the last three acts he develops into a strong, evil man, full of rude, brute courage that has its root in an overweening sense of his own social rank and importance. While

addicted also to degrading and bestial vices, without any redeeming traits that might countervail these. In a word, he is of the earth, earthy, with not a spark of heavenly goodness to leaven his unrighteousness. Gervinus sums him up as "a prince of the lowest and meanest character, full of the brutal arrogance which even in high station assumes the appearance of clownish pride, a clod without a soul, whose sputtering and blustering speech at once expresses the emptiness of his head and the brutishness of his disposition. It was not possible to devise for the sweet Imogen a greater blockhead for a wooer."

Belarius, otherwise old Morgan, was a type of the dauntless warriors reared by the elder age, whom the foolish Cymbeline for some imagined fault had banished, notwithstanding that, as a warrior he had been one of the bulwarks of the throne. He went into exile full of bitter wrath over the injustice to which he had been subjected, and in revenge abducted the King's two sons, whom in distant sylvan fastnesses he had reared as his own, training them to expertness in the use of the warlike weapons of the time. Two finer youths than Guiderius and Arviragus—youths more firmly grounded in moral steadfastness and early love of glory—it would be hard to find. In their foster-father and themselves we have examples of that manly type of human nature which scorns the mean and the base, and seems to regard as its natural element the atmosphere of truth, honour, and piety.

Of the three Hazlitt says: "Their characters and the romantic scenes in which they appear are a fine relief to the intrigues and artificial refinements of the Court from which they are banished. Nothing can surpass the wildness and simplicity of the descriptions of the mountain life they lead. They follow the business of huntsmen, not of shepherds, and this is in keeping with the spirit of adventure and uncertainty in the rest of the story, and with the scenes in which they are after-

wards called on to act. How admirably the youthful fire and impatience to emerge from their obscurity is opposed to the cooler calculations and prudent resignation of their more experienced counsellor. How well the disadvantages of knowledge and of ignorance, of solitude and of society, are placed against each other."

Gervinus adds: "On the first impression the two brothers seem both alike in character; on a closer inspection it is not so. The elder, Guiderius, the destined heir, is the more manly of the two. At the very beginning he is the more successful hunter. When he meets the rude Cloten, without knowing him, when the latter provokes him with language that would have made him 'spurn the sea if it could roar so at him,' and threatens his life, he kills him without hesitation, confesses it (to the envy of Arviragus) to his alarmed foster-father, and afterwards without fear or reflection to the royal step-father himself, though warned by Belarius that this acknowledgment would bring on him torture and death. In contrast to him, Arviragus appears throughout more tender and gentle, more communicative and richer in his choice of language." To them fear is unknown. They love good and they love great things, and when the opportunity comes to do their country service, they take occasion by the hand with the ready resoluteness which betokens a strongly based moral nature finely touched to the appreciation and achievement of high issues, by a keen realisation of the "categorical imperative" of duty.

In Iachimo we have a specimen of the wretched moral weeds which the Roman Empire, in its last days, called "its citizens and its soldiers." Here was a man who, when he could not win his wager by fair means, must, forsooth, resort to fraud, notwithstanding that by so doing, he wrecked the honour of a true-souled and pure-minded lady, and well-nigh broke the

heart of a noble gentleman who trusted his word. Iachimo had much of the spirit of Iago in *Othello* and of Edmund in *King Lear*. His own selfish interests first, let the rest of the world fare how it might! His character is utterly despicable. To him true virtue is a myth. He is one of those who believe that every woman has her price in some subtle weakness or other which lays her open to successful assault on that side of her nature, could the vulnerable spot only be divined. With an invincible belief in his own ability to read the heart of woman, from a somewhat wide experience amongst the butterflies of fashion in many social circles, he forms the fateful wager. But in Imogen he met a type of woman he had never met before, "as chaste as unsunned snow." Five minutes in her company convinced him that his wager was lost, unless fraud could effect what fair-dealing failed to achieve. That Iachimo could stoop to such conduct stamps the man as beneath contempt. Ulrici dismisses him in two or three stinging words as "Iachimo, the cunning, intriguing deceiver, who is chastised by the deep misery he prepares for himself and others;" while Hazlitt only refers to "the persevering determination of Iachimo to conceal the defeat of his project by a daring imposture;" and Dowden sums up the dastardly nature of his sin in the words: "The wrong which Posthumus suffered from the Italian Iachimo is only less than that which Othello endures at the hands of Iago. But Iachimo, unlike Iago, is unable to sustain the burden of his guilt, and sinks under it." In the closing scene of *Cymbeline*—that in which Posthumus is himself welcomed home to the heart of Imogen—Posthumus in his turn becomes the pardoner—

> "Kneel not to me;
> The power that I have on you is to spare you;
> The malice towards you to forgive you; live,
> And deal with others better."

We come now to glance at the two principal characters—Posthumus and Imogen. Posthumus was a worthy gentleman, of all high honour and just sentiments full compact. To have consciously wronged another by a hair's-breadth would have been a moral lapse for which he would never have forgiven himself. It was this high sense of honour in his own soul that led him to credit so readily Iachimo's horrible report. A smaller-minded man would have been more incredulous. Posthumus, however, simply could not believe that any man could fail to act honourably towards another, so terrible he imagined would be his own self-condemnation. To him a man without a conscience was an ethical impossibility. He could not lie because to lie and yet to live would be a moral contradiction. To him the only life possible was the life of truth. In the clears unlit atmosphere of ethical rectitude, Posthumus lived, moved, and had his being, being one of the loftiest moral characters Shakespeare has given us. By the life of Posthumus, the lesson taught is, that supreme love of truth may lead a man into mistaken judgment. Had he suspended decision until he had confronted Imogen with her accuser's tale, a very noble drama would have been spoiled, but the agony of suspected infidelity would, so far at least, have been mitigated.

"The sin of Posthumus (says Dowden) had been half an error, and his restoration is proportionately more joyful. He too had learnt his own unworthiness and the measureless worth of Imogen. He will not render to the gods in atonement for his wrong less than his whole life. 'For Imogen's dear life take mine, and though 'tis not so dear, yet 'tis a life.'"

Ulrici well says that "the root and source of all the sufferings which Posthumus and Imogen passed through was the foolish and sinful wager into which Posthumus allowed himself to be dragged, when his lady's honour was virtually to be made the point

of attack, the besieged city, by one who was, to his own knowledge, a professed *roué* and debauchee. This false step even threatens to become the ruin of his noble nature. But the fate which he had arranged for himself, the death he wished to meet of his own free will, is changed by the counterplay of accident and the intrigues of others, into happiness and life."

Gervinus remarks of Posthumus: "He was the foster-son of Cymbeline, and repaid his education with early ripeness. In his early youth he stands forth as a sample of perfect manhood. Without seeing yet for ourselves, in the actions of the young man, the actual proofs of his worth, in the very first scene we hear from the mouths of the courtiers, his almost over-estimated value, and we have at any rate the speaking proof of the universal esteem in which he is held—an esteem that disarms envy itself. For they say he was—

> 'A sample to the youngest; to the more mature
> A glass that feated them; and to the graver
> A child that guided dotards;'

while Iachimo in the hour of his remorse calls him 'the best of all amongst the rarest of good ones.'"

Now what of his *alter ego*—Imogen? She is unquestionably one of the most perfect—some think *the* most perfect—female character in Shakespearian drama. Beatrice is more piquant, Rosalind more arch and insouciant, Viola more winsome, Miranda sweeter, Portia more brilliant, and Perdita more charmingly coquettish and fascinating, but Imogen sums up all in herself. She has, moreover, the almighty virtue of supreme patience and of invincible charity—a charity which thinketh no evil and ever looks on the best side of things. That is the great and predominating characteristic of Imogen. Amidst a world of falseness and low ideals, she is at once the type and the triumph of unflinching truth in thought, speech,

and behaviour, while for her no plane of life is possible save the loftiest and the most enlightened. She realises that the lamp of truth must ever be kept burning, and never once, as in the case of Desdemona and Ophelia, do we find equivocations being advanced when absolute truth was demanded. The whole world might think evil of the one she loved, but for her there would only be the most perfect truth and the most absolute confidence in his fidelity. Despite all she had suffered from Posthumus, under his mistaken anger at her supposed infidelity, all she does is to cry, "Some jay of Italy hath betrayed him." She is truly a lovely compound of goodness, truth, and profound affection, with just so much of passion and of poetry as serves to impart to the picture that wonderful richness and complexity of effect that results from strength in purity.

Dowden thus analyses her character: "Imogen, who is the reverse of grave and massive in character, but who has an exquisite vivacity of feeling and of fancy, and a heart pure, quick, and ardent, passes from the swoon of the sudden anguish to a mood of bright and keen resentment, which is free from every trace of vindictive passion, and indeed is only pain disguised. In like manner she forgives, not with self-possession and with a broad tranquil joy in the accomplished fact, but through a pure ardour, an exquisite eagerness of love and of delight."

Hazlitt says: "Of all Shakespeare's women, Imogen is perhaps the most tender and the most artless. Her incredulity in the opening scene with Iachimo as to her husband's infidelity is much the same as Desdemona's backwardness to believe Othello's jealousy. Her answer to the most distressing part of the picture is only, 'My lord, I fear, has forgot Britain.' Her readiness to pardon Iachimo's false imputations and his designs against herself is a good lesson to prudes, and may show that, where there is a real attachment

to virtue, it has no need to bolster itself up with an outrageous or affected antipathy to vice."

Finally, Gervinus says: "One of the most prominent characteristics in Imogen's character after her truth and her purity is her healthy simplicity and her natural view of a world abounding with all that is unnatural. She had remained true, simple, and innocent at the Court, in the midst of intrigues and baseness. She could thus maintain herself by virtue of that womanly property of not allowing herself to be influenced by hateful external things. She lived in the light of those pure ideals which make for sincerity, simplicity, and truth."

Section 3.—A Winter's Tale. 1610

Our second play, in the Fourth Period of Shakespeare's dramatic development, is *A Winter's Tale*, also a piece treating of the loss of children through the unjust or foolish acts of parents. In *Cymbeline*, the King of Britain was deprived of his sons as a punishment for his unjust banishment of a brave and noble-hearted warrior. In *A Winter's Tale*, King Leontes, by his folly in crediting a lying tale, is deprived of his wife, and son, and daughter, and in addition, the injured wife is deprived of her daughter. In both cases, reunion is accomplished by a marvellous series of accidents.

Of the play, Dr. Furnivall in the Leopold Shakespeare says: "The golden glow of the sunset of his genius is over it, the sweet country air blows all through it, and of few if any of his plays is there a pleasanter picture in the memory than of *A Winter's Tale*. As long as men can think, shall Perdita brighten and sweeten, Hermione ennoble men's minds and lives. How happily, too, it brings Shakespeare before us, mixing with his Stratford neighbours at their sheep-shearing and country sports, enjoying the vaga-

bond pedlar's gammon and talk, delighting in the sweet Warwickshire maidens and buying them 'fairings,' telling goblin stories to the boys—'There was a man dwelt by a churchyard'—opening his heart afresh to all the innocent mirth and the beauty of nature around him. The play is late in metre, in feeling, in purpose. It has no five-measure rhyme in its dialogue, its end-stopt lines are only one in 2.12 per cent., its double endings are as many as one in 2.85 per cent., it has passages in Shakespeare's latest budding style, 'What you do, still betters what is done.' Its purpose, its lesson, is to teach forgiveness of wrongs, not vengeance for them."

A. W. Schlegel also says: "The *Winter's Tale* is as appropriately named as *A Midsummer Night's Dream.* It is one of those tales which are peculiarly calculated to beguile the dreary leisure of a long winter evening; which are attractive and intelligible even to childhood, and which, animated by fervent truth in the delineation of character and passion, invested with the decoration of a poetry lowering itself as it were to the simplicity of the subject, transport even manhood back to the golden age of imagination."

Written in all probability in 1610, *A Winter's Tale* was played in May 1611, if not before, being witnessed by Dr. Simon Forman in the Globe Theatre on the 15th of the month in question. It was first published in the Folio of 1623, where it stands the last of the Comedies. The text is very carefully printed. The links of romance which ally it with *Pericles, Cymbeline,* and *The Tempest* are of a very close character, the four dramas all falling under the same category.

The scene of the action is located in Sicily in the first two acts, then in Bohemia, and finally back in Sicily. Shakespeare is not responsible for giving a sea-coast to Bohemia. That had already been done by Greene in the prose romance whence the drama was drawn, *Dorastus and Fawnia.*

The Time-Analysis assigns for the duration of the play's action a period of over sixteen years, though on the stage only eight days are actually represented, as follows—

Day			
I.	embracing Act	I.	Sc. i.-ii.
II.		II.	. Interval of 23 days.
III.		II.	i.-iii.; III. i.
IV.		III.	ii.; Interval: Antigonus' voyage.
V.		III.	iii.; Interval [IV. i.] of 16 years.
VI.		IV.	ii.-iii.
VII.		IV.	iv.; Interval.
VIII.		V.	i.-iii.

The evidence furnished towards the settlement of date, by the metrical tests applied to the piece, reveals some interesting facts. The total number of lines in the drama is 2750, of which 844 are in prose, and 1825 in blank verse of Shakespeare's latest style. If we except the chorus-prologue to Act IV., there are, as Dr. Furnivall says, no instances of rhyme in the play. The percentage of feminine endings shows a steady increase, 32.9 per cent. being registered, as against 30.7 per cent. for *Cymbeline*, while there are in addition 57 light endings and 43 weak endings, a slight decrease, however, on *Cymbeline*. Run-on lines number 37.5 per cent., a decided drop from 46 per cent. of *Cymbeline*. However, the speech-ending test somewhat redresses the balance, which shows 87.6 per cent. as against 85 per cent. The technical structure of the play is involved and intricate, the style often so elliptical as to become obscure, while the thought frequently overloads the line, to the extent of rendering it harsh in assonance. All these characteristics show that the play must be assigned to the very close of Shakespeare's career, in fact, that it was almost the last of the great Shakespearian Cycle.[1]

We now come to investigate the sources whence the materials were drawn. The play is founded on the beautiful romance by his old rival and enemy, Robert

[1] Saintsbury, *History of English Prosody*, vol. ii.

Greene, originally entitled *Pandosto* (1588), but afterwards *Dorastus and Fawnia*. Some critics urge that *A Winter's Tale* must, in date, follow *The Tempest*, because in Greene's romance, Fawnia, who corresponds to Perdita in the play, is exposed in a rudderless boat. Miranda in *The Tempest* is subjected to this treatment, and the argument is that Shakespeare leaves Perdita exposed on the shore of Bohemia, to avoid repeating an incident he had formerly utilised. But, as Mr. Morton Luce says, in all likelihood the plot of *The Tempest* was already in draft before *A Winter's Tale* was completed, and this circumstance would explain all.

The plot of *A Winter's Tale* is as follows: Leontes, King of Sicily, and his wife Hermione, receive a visit from their friend Polixenes, King of Bohemia. When the latter proposes to take leave, Leontes begs him to stay, but he declines until Queen Hermione joins her entreaties to her husband's, when he consents. This innocent piece of courtesy to a lady and a queen is made the occasion by Leontes of believing that his Queen is too familiar with Polixenes. He voices his suspicions to Camillo, who unavailingly endeavours to drive such unworthy ideas from his monarch's mind. Leontes at length proposes that Camillo should poison Polixenes, and the faithful old lord only feigns to consent, that he may warn the victim of his danger and flee with him. This is accomplished safely.

As soon as Leontes realises that he has been deceived, he bursts in upon the Queen, reviling her in the coarsest terms. She repudiates his insults with dignity, but the King will listen to no reason, and orders her to prison. She is removed there, and only just reaches it when she gives birth to a daughter. Paulina, the wife of Antigonus, carries the babe into the presence of Leontes, and after showing it to him roundly rates him for his unjust suspicions. Leontes,

however, only becomes more enraged than ever, and orders Antigonus, as the penalty of his wife's temerity, to take the child away and to expose it where it will die or be adopted by some one else. This is done by Antigonus, who, after carrying the babe to Bohemia, is killed by a bear while executing the orders of his master. Perdita is found by some shepherds, and is reared by them in the simple manners and customs of the country.

Meantime Leontes has consulted the oracle at Delphi regarding his wife's guilt, and summons her to hear the response and then to plead why its orders should not be carried out. To his amazement the oracle pronounces his wife innocent. Leontes, enraged, denies the truth of the oracular response, and commands the trial of his wife to proceed.

He has, however, now reached the limit of his impious conduct. The Queen, Hermione, is about to plead, when a servant rushing in declares that the only son of Leontes and Hermione, the young Mamillius, had at that moment died through grief at his mother's suffering. Leontes immediately sees in this stroke an intimation that the gods are offended with him for his unjust persecution of his wife. On hearing of the death of Mamillius, Hermione had swooned and been carried out insensible. When, therefore, Leontes determines to apologise to his wronged Queen, and to declare her innocence to all the land, and calls for her to be brought, he is informed that his repentance has come too late and that Hermione is no more.

This, however, is only a stratagem on the part of Paulina to ensure that, ere reunion takes place, the repentance and atonement of Leontes shall be well proved, and that meantime Hermione shall be well treated. For sixteen years the atonement continues, and at last, when suffering has begotten the new soul, the King is invited to inspect, at the house of Paulina, the wonderful statue of the late Queen, by the great

sculptor, Giulio Romano. Leontes goes and is struck dumb by the likeness. He sees the bosom heave, the eye move, then Paulina orders the statue to descend, and the mighty reconcilement of the two long-sundered hearts is accomplished. But a greater joy awaits Hermione. Perdita in Bohemia had been brought up as the child of shepherd parents, the atmosphere and customs, however, being Warwickshire to the life. At the cottage of her supposed father, Perdita has been seen by Prince Florizel, son of Polixenes. The young man becomes desperately in love, and is willing to resign all the future rank to which he becomes heir, if he might marry Perdita. His father hears of his infatuation, and spies upon the lovers in disguise. The whole scene of the sheep-shearing festival is a picture of rural Warwickshire in the early seventeenth century, being of exquisite Arcadian beauty and vivid rural truth. In the flowers which Perdita scatters before the guests at the feast, we seem to catch a glimpse of some such scene, which had taken place nine-and-twenty or thirty years before, when young William Shakespeare, then unmarried, had seen the beautiful Anne Hathaway as queen of the feast of that day, and had straightway fallen in love with her. So graphic a picture as is drawn in *A Winter's Tale*, of Perdita and Florizel at the sheep-shearing feast, must surely have been sketched from the life.

But Polixenes very naturally desires no mere rural beauty, however good, to be Queen in Bohemia. He forbids Florizel to have any further dealings with Perdita, and severely blames the shepherd for encouraging them. Though Perdita refuses to marry Florizel at first, they agree on Camillo's suggestion to go to Sicily. There Perdita's origin is soon revealed; Polixenes ere long follows in pursuit of his son, and after suitable explanations, the two lovers are united amid the paternal benedictions of both fathers. The

whole company, a few hours later, is present at the resurrection of Hermione.

The plot can scarcely be called a perfect technical success. The two parts, the Hermione and the Perdita, do not fit in very closely to one another. The suture is badly visible, and he who runs can read that faulty art is present there.

The characters are all well and clearly drawn. Leontes is a capital portrait of an impulsive, pragmatical old man, wedded to a wife doubtless a good deal younger than himself. He is fully conscious of his own deficiencies, but that very fact makes him all the more intolerantly jealous of her. He cannot bear to see her speak even words of the most formal courtesy to those whom he considers likely to be his rivals. The mind of Leontes is so blinded by caprice and the determination not to see facts that will prove him wrong, that he commits injustice to save his reputation. Because Paulina has dared to tell him the truth, he makes her unfortunate husband the virtual executioner of his daughter, Perdita. True, his martyrdom of repentance was both prolonged and poignant, but to have "called back" Hermione from her imagined grave before the penance had worked out its ethical and spiritual effects, would be to err at a point where no remedy would then be possible. Fortunately the soul of Leontes was ripe for the resurrection of its love, and he welcomed Hermione, as Martha and Mary, Lazarus, as given back from the tomb. Leontes had not realised that the true ideal of kingship is the Kingship of Self-Control, carried into all the duties, relations, and offices of life. There is much we should like to do, but which, if done, might prove both repugnant and hurtful to our neighbour, whose interests we ought to conserve as our own. This doctrine Leontes had never perceived in aught but its most elementary bearing. Self, and particularly self in its capacity of irresponsible monarch, is the object of

his worship, therefore self-control, implying as it does self-limitation, is almost equivalent to treason in his eyes. "The right divine of kings to govern wrong," a political theory associated with the policy of the Stuarts in Britain centuries later, was almost that of Leontes of Sicily.

Hartley Coleridge thus refers to the character in question: "The sudden jealousy of Leontes, though unaccountable, is not impossible. I am not sure that the ready soliciting of Hermione and the easy compliance of Polixenes, might not produce in a better mind a momentary cloud, a wish that the request had not been made, an impatience for Polixenes' departure. . . . But the exhibition of such madness of the heart, if fit for drama at all, should be confined to the sternest tragedy. The grossness of Leontes' imaginations, his murderous suggestions, and inaccessibility to reason, remorse, or religion, is naturally consequent on the base passion—say rather the unclean dæmon—that possesses him." [1]

Mrs. Jameson says: "The self-created frantic jealousy of Leontes is very distinct from that of Othello, writhing under the arts of Iago; or that of Posthumus, whose understanding has been cheated by the most damning evidence of his wife's infidelity. The jealousy which, in Othello and Posthumus, is an error of judgment, in Leontes is a vice of the blood. He suspects without cause, condemns without proof: he is absolutely without excuse."

A. W. Schlegel remarks: "The jealousy of Leontes is not, like that of Othello, developed with all its causes, symptoms, and gradations; it is brought forward at once and is portrayed as a distempered frenzy. It is a passion with whose effects the spectator is more concerned than with its origin, and which does not produce the catastrophe, but merely ties the knot of the piece;" to which Heinrich Bulthaupt adds: "The

[1] Hartley Coleridge, *Essays and Marginalia.*

speed with which Leontes, one of the most disagreeable men on God's earth, talks himself into a jealous madness is certainly in the worst sense 'more than human.' Merely because his wife converses earnestly with his guest, his most trusted friend, after her request had induced that guest to remain longer in Sicily, this horrible bloodthirsty creature turns to a manifold murderer."

Polixenes is altogether a slighter character, one of those amorous, kindly-dispositioned men who can refuse nothing to a woman. His attitude towards Leontes and Hermione was simply that of a warm-hearted intimate friend, who rejoiced that Heaven had given him friends so firm and true. He did not share the ideas of Leontes, that "rank must rule and blood must tell," nor did he, on the other hand, feel that "love was enough, let rank go hang," when his son and heir sought to marry the shepherd-maiden, Perdita. Excellent in the abstract is the supremacy of love, he considers, but when the concrete application concerns a prince and heir-apparent, circumstances alter cases. Nay, as we read the play, though our hearts may applaud the pluck and determination of Prince Florizel to stick to Perdita and let rank go, our better judgment approves the father's order as not only expedient but salutary. Hartley Coleridge considers Polixenes "not very amiable, in truth not much of anything, while the length of time he remains witness to his son's courtship before he discovers himself is a sacrifice to effect. He was evidently a man who liked to live in the eye of men."

Queen Hermione is one of the most stately and majestic figures in the entire Shakespearian gallery. Her Juno-like beauty, full of that statuesque dignity that becomes Shakespeare's queens so well—Elinor, Isabel of France, Margaret of England, Elizabeth, Queen of Edward IV., and others—is inspired by a Diana-like purity that fears even the appearance or

approach of evil. The foul charges hurled at her by Leontes affect her not, they seem to glance by her and to strike at her child. As soon as she realises that fact, all the maternal instinct in her is on the *qui vive*, lest the foul slander that has assailed her should smirch her daughter. Immediately she becomes the type of protecting maternity, ready to renounce all and to suffer all, provided her child is shielded from all slander. This fact it is that leads her with splendid fortitude to consent to die to the world, that her child might live and not blush on account of her mother's shame. In that way, and in that only, the slander of Leontes could be met.

Mrs. Jameson writes of her: "The character of Hermione exhibits what is never found in the other sex, and but rarely in our own, dignity without pride, love without passion, tenderness without weakness, and fortitude without sternness. Hermione is a queen, a matron, and a mother; she is good and beautiful, and royally descended. A majestic sweetness, a grand and gracious simplicity, an easy, unforced, yet dignified self-possession, are in all her deportment and in every word she utters. The character of Hermione is considered open to criticism on one point. I have heard it remarked that, when she secluded herself from the world for sixteen years, during which time she is mourned as dead by her repentant husband, and is not won to relent by his sorrow, his remorse, his constancy to her memory, such conduct, argues the critic, is unfeeling as it is inconceivable in a tender and virtuous woman. Would Imogen have done so . . . or Desdemona? No, assuredly; but this is only another proof of the wonderful delicacy and consistency with which Shakespeare has discriminated the characters of all three."

Also Lewes has said: "For sixteen years Hermione permits her husband and the world to believe that she is dead, and it is only when her daughter has been

found that she, in the famous statue scene, returns to life, and to her penitent husband. This conduct has been pronounced heartless and unnatural. The reproach is unmerited. Hermione's husband with base suspicion had mistrusted her faithfulness, and thereby forfeited her respect. She has been publicly branded, her innocent little daughter exposed to a horrible death, her promising son is dead, killed by her disgrace. For such injuries and pain a mere tardy acknowledgment is no sufficing compensation. The instant repentance of her husband does not suffice again to restore him to a place in her heart. Can the high-souled wife, in royal array, again walk proudly at a Court which had witnessed her degradation, childless, widowed in heart by that husband, to whom she will be a constant reproach, an ever-present humiliation? Therein is neither true feeling nor nature! Wounded in heart and soul, nothing remained to her but to retire from life, not to brood over her injuries, but to learn forgiveness, and through a penitence long sustained by her husband, to have him become once more worthy of her."

Perdita and Florizel must be considered together The one is the complement of the other. No finer nor fairer pair of lovers strays through the golden glades and the flower-gemmed fields of Shakespearian romance. Perdita is a charming blend of sincerity and sweetness, and of beauty and of graciousness. The most diverse mental qualities seem to meet in her. She is modest and retiring, yet fond of pageantry and pomp, because the sight of general happiness delights her; absolutely unsophisticated, because she has always lived face to face with the grand elemental verities of nature, so sincere and guileless, moreover, that she hates false colours in men and women, and false (or forced) hues in flowers. She loves the country and feels most at home there. Yet so deep is her love for Florizel, that should he desire her to take her place

in the great artificial world, she will do it, yea, do it with grace and glory to herself, but certainly not with joy. She realises when her gay attire has been donned that she "smacks of something higher than her station," also that "her robe doth change her disposition." As, however, she has given herself over to Florizel to do as he wills and to be guided by his will, she feels a calmness approaching resignation about the future. If Florizel is compelled to obey his father and to leave her, she realises that such a contingency would sound the death-knell of her existence, for life without Florizel would be death. On the other hand, she had been endowed with a large portion of the resigned yet resilient nature of her mother, who so soon recovered from the effects of sorrow or depression, and Perdita was strong in her determination to do her duty, however strong her love. As Stopford Brooke admirably puts it in his *Ten Plays of Shakespeare*: "Perdita's passionate love, her soft tenderness, do not affect her intellect. Like Hermione, she is quite clear-eyed; keen to divide the true from the false, quiet through good sense in hours of confused trouble."

Florizel's character is a study of greater complexity yet of splendid harmony. His life, as we know it in the drama, may be summed up as an attempt to reconcile parental and conjugal duty. He dearly loved his father, and would never dream of acting in any matter contrary to his expressed wishes. That father, however, had forbidden him to think more of Perdita, whom he loved better than his own life, on the ground that he (Florizel) was the heir-apparent to the throne of Bohemia, and that a shepherdess queen would be an utter anomaly. To give her up, whom he loved with an affection which was really a twin-growth now with his whole nature, was impossible. Life without Perdita would to him resemble the noontide heavens without the sun. He had wooed Perdita with the most honourable intentions

from the first hour in which he had met her, and he now, in the face of the parental order, swears to her that he will abandon all for her sake—rank, position, country—and by his conduct he proves the absolute sincerity and nobility of his nature. But in fulfilling his pledge to Perdita what about his duty to his father? As Kreyssig says: "It is wrong that one who has thrown to the winds his filial and princely obligations should be so richly rewarded with Perdita's love and the kingdoms of Leontes and Polixenes in reversion." Kreyssig forgets, however, the old command of Scripture: "A man shall forsake father and mother and shall cleave unto his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh." In this way, and in this way only, can Florizel reconcile the two codes of duty, the conjugal and the filial. The lower must give place to the higher, the parental to the conjugal!

Of Perdita and Florizel, the great German Shakespearian scholar, A. W. Schlegel, writes: "Nothing can be more fresh and youthful, nothing at once so ideally pastoral and princely, as the love of Florizel and Perdita; of the Prince whom love converts into a voluntary shepherd, and the Princess who betrays her exalted origin without knowing it, and in whose hands the nosegays become crowns. Shakespeare has never hesitated to place ideal poetry close beside the most vulgar prose; and this is also generally the case in the world of reality. Perdita's foster-father and his son are both represented as simple-minded rustics, that we may the more distinctly see that whatever ennobles Perdita belongs to herself."

To the above, Kreyssig's fine addendum must be given: "Florizel's whole character represents the sovereign power of true genuine love over the external forces of the world. Not for an instant do the thoughts of his birth, of his rank, of his duty to his father and to his country in the future make him waver in the choice he has made for life." Of Perdita,

Professor Hudson writes: "A playmate of the flowers, when we see her with them, we are at a loss whether they take more inspiration from her or she from them; and while she is the sweetest of poets in making nosegays, the nosegays become in her hands the richest of crowns."

Paulina, the wife of Antigonus, is one of the strong characters of the play. She is the staunch friend of Hermione, and fights her battle with splendid tenacity and determination. Warm-hearted and resolute, sagacious yet impulsive, earnest and eager, inspired by noble impulses and controlled by an exalted sense of duty, as Mr. W. W. Lloyd remarks, "she is a necessity to the play, and without the support derived from her constant presence it would scarcely be intelligible how such a man as Leontes could retain the force and freshness of feeling, after sixteen years had elapsed, that are required to give interest to the recognition and to satisfy our sympathies with the honour of Hermione. She is the thorn in the flesh that may preserve it from callosity."

One other character must be mentioned, viz., the merry rogue whose songs are so delightful, and who flits through the play like a mirth-loving Robin Goodfellow. He has no affinity with the representatives of pure rusticity in the piece, the shepherd and his son, also Mopsa and Dorcas, who are delightful types of Warwickshire chawbacons and rural beauties and coquettes. Autolycus, I repeat, has nothing to do with them save to utilise them in the way of business when plying his vocation as "a snapper-up of unconsidered trifles." He is rather the ancestor of all the glorious "picaroons" that were to follow him, of the line and lineage of Gil Blas, and is unquestionably the most delightful of all Shakespeare's rogues. Gifted with a glib tongue, he is never at a loss for a plausible story. Though the gallows is his due, rather do we take the verdict of Professor Dowden regarding him:

"The act of thieving as practised by him is no crime, but the gift of some knavish god. He does not trample on the laws of morality, but dances or leaps over them, with so nimble a foot that we forbear to stay him. We love the rogue, for even while he is filching our purse he is smiling in our face and paying us a compliment. Then he leaves us with his merry round, 'Lawn as white as driven snow,' or the inspiring—

> 'Jog on, jog on the footpath way,
> And merrily hent the stile-a,
> The merry heart goes all the day,
> The sad tires in a mile-a.'"

Life too often would be dull indeed without our Autolycuses—those ne'er-do-weels at whom we daily shake our head—yet love!

Of Autolycus, Henry Giles also says: "But for Autolycus the ideal world would have wanted its most admirable rascal—the actual world would have been deprived of a type for characters that are like him in everything but his brilliancy. For he is a brilliant scapegrace, a knave of many faculties, of sparkling versatility of parts; with wit equal to his thievery;" and Dr. Furnivall adds: "Not only do we see Shakespeare's freshness of spirit in his production of Perdita, but also in his creation of Autolycus. That at the close of his dramatic life, after all the troubles he had passed through, Shakespeare had yet the youngness of heart to bubble out into this merry rogue, the incarnation of fun and rascality, and let him sail off successful and unharmed, is wonderful."

Section 4.—The Tempest. 1611

We reach now the last of the dramas of Shakespeare. With regard to it one feels that the atmosphere of leave-taking and farewell is present over all. There can be little doubt that when Shakespeare completed

The Tempest he realised that his active work as a dramatist was done.

Of the play, Dr. Samuel Johnson says: "Whatever might be Shakespeare's intention in forming or adapting the plot, he has made it instrumental to the production of many characters, diversified with boundless invention, and preserved with profound skill in nature, extensive knowledge of opinions, and accurate observation of life. In a single drama are here exhibited princes, courtiers, and sailors, all speaking in their real characters."

And William Hazlitt says: "*The Tempest* is one of the most original and perfect of Shakespeare's productions, and he has shown in it all the variety of his powers. It is full of grace and grandeur. The human and the imaginary characters, the dramatic and the grotesque, are blended together with the greatest art and without any appearance of it. Though he has here given 'to airy nothing a local habitation and a name,' yet that part which is only the fantastic creation of his mind has the same palpable texture and coheres semblably with the rest."

Victor Hugo propounds the following remarkable theory: "*The Tempest* is the supreme *denoûment*, dreamed by Shakespeare, for the bloody drama of Genesis. It is the expiation of the primordial crime. The region whither it transports us is the enchanted land where the science of damnation is absolved by clemency, and where reconciliation is assured by amnesty to the fratricide. And at the close of the piece, where the poet, touched by emotion, throws Antonio into the arms of Prospero, he has made Cain pardoned by Abel."

The date of composition is probably 1611, and the form in which the play was first given to the public was in the Folio of 1623, where it occupies the first place (pp. 1-19), and no allusion has ever been discovered to any earlier issue.

A theory was mooted by Tieck, the German Shakespearian scholar, that *The Tempest* was really a masque written for the occasion of the marriage of the Princess Elizabeth with the Elector Frederick. The ceremony took place on 14th February 1612-13, and *The Tempest* was one of the nineteen dramas played on the occasion. But it had certainly been produced long before that date, and the year 1613 would be altogether too late to fit in with the known facts of Shakespeare's life.

The play, as regards its sources, is obviously associated with the romance of discovery and colonisation. In the story of the wreck there is probably direct reference to the loss of the *Sea-Venture*, the flag-ship of Admiral Sir George Somers, in July 1609. The ship had been driven ashore on the Bermuda coast, where it became fast wedged between two rocks. The crew succeeded in getting to land, and from the timber built themselves two boats, in which they sailed to Virginia, whence they got a passage to England. As has been stated in the facts of the life of the poet, a volume appeared in 1610 written by Sylvester Jourdain, one of the survivors, and entitled, *A Discovery of the Bermudas, otherwise called the Ile of Divils*, and so many parallels appear between the book and the play that the conclusion is inevitable that Shakespeare in writing the drama must have had the book before him. The name Setebos is probably drawn from Eden's *History of Travaile*, and for the details of the enchanted island he may have been indebted to Hakluyt's collection of *Voyagers' Tales*. There is also considerable similarity between the plot and that of a German play, *Die Schöne Sidea*, by Jacob Ayrer of Nuremberg, who died in 1605. Shakespeare may have heard of the *Sidea* from some of those " English actors " who were in Nuremberg in 1604 and 1606 performing the *Sidea* in German. Some critics would date the play as late as 1612, based on the use of one of the possible sources. William

Strachey, also a survivor from the wreck, returned to England towards the close of 1611, and at once prepared a fuller account of the catastrophe and of the place of its occurrence. The Rev. W. G. Gosling points out that Strachey wrote these " in his lodging in the Blackfriars," and indicates so many parallelisms between this later account and the play that it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that either Strachey had borrowed from the play, or the play from him. Perhaps Shakespeare may have seen the tractate in MS.[1]

The name Ariel comes to us from the Hebrew, and may have been suggested to Shakespeare by the reference in Isaiah xxix. 1, " Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt! " Caliban, some scholars think, is a metathesis or variant of " Canibal," which is itself derived from " Carib " and " Caribal "=" Caribbean." Others, however, reject this derivation. It probably may be a purely fanciful name to shadow forth a purely fanciful creation.[2]

The scene is laid in " an uninhabited island." Some critics have thought Shakespeare had Lampedusa in his mind, others that Pantellaria was the scene, both of them lying between Italy and Tunis. Yet another class of scholars have argued for the Bermudas; and a fourth Corcyra. Shakespeare has wisely left everything vague, and it is best to leave Prospero's island in that romantic latitude and longitude where are Swift's Lilliput and Brobdingnag, and many another delicious country whose location is sufficiently accurately described by " Over the hills and far away."

The Time-Analysis shows that Shakespeare had adhered strictly to the time-unity of classic drama, that the action should be confined within the limits

[1] *Cf.* article in *Literature* on 8th and 15th April and on 3rd June 1899.

[2] *Cf.* Browning's *Caliban upon Setebos*, Daniel Wilson's *Caliban, or the Missing Link*, and Renan's *Caliban*, a drama continuing Shakespeare's play.

of twenty-four hours. The duration of the action in *The Tempest* is four hours. *Cf.* Act I. Sc. ii. ll. 239-240; V. i. 1-5, 136-137, 186, 223.

The metrical analysis of the play is as follows: *The Tempest* is the fourth shortest drama of Shakespeare, the lengths being: *The Comedy of Errors* 1770 lines, *Macbeth* 1993, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* 2060, and *The Tempest* 2068. Of these 2068 lines there are 458 lines in prose and 1458 in blank verse. The blank verse is of a subtly compiled character, the mid-line pauses being varied with supreme art to make the music of the complete speech proceed upon as definite a system of assonantal harmony as the line and the couplet. Of rhymes we have only one instance occurring in the play (II. i. 364-365), though we have one or two instances of mid-line rhymes (III. i. 28-30)—

> " If you'll sit down,
> I'll bear your logs the while. Pray give me that:
> I'll carry it to the pile; "

a similar instance manifesting itself in III. iii. 67-69. Whether intended or not, the rhymes are certainly there. The percentage of rhyme then in the play is only 0.1. Of feminine endings there are 35.4 per cent., and in addition 42 light endings and 22 weak endings, showing a slight decrease as compared with *A Winter's Tale* and *Cymbeline*. Enjambement is present in the play to the extent of 41.5 per cent., an increase upon the *Winter's Tale*, though a decrease as compared with *Cymbeline*. The speech-ending test shows a slight decrease as compared with the *Winter's Tale*, being 84.5 per cent. as against 87.6.[1]

The evidence from metrical tests, therefore, would place *The Tempest* earlier in date than either the *Winter's Tale* and *Cymbeline*, but this we know by external evidence cannot be. It serves to show, however, that the testimony from metrical characteristics,

[1] Saintsbury, *History of English Prosody*, vol. ii.

however valuable, must be used with caution and discrimination.

The plot of *The Tempest* is so well known that it needs little explanation. A vessel in which are Alonso, King of Naples, Sebastian, his brother, Antonio, the usurping Duke of Milan, Ferdinand, son of King Alonso, and several of their nobles and gentlemen, has gone ashore on the enchanted island, where dwells Prospero, the rightful Duke of Milan. Many years before this time, the last-named had been expelled from Milan by his usurping brother, Antonio, put into a rudderless boat with some chests of clothing and his books of magic, and accompanied by his little daughter, Miranda, who had recently lost her mother by death, sent adrift on the sea to sink or swim as the chance mercy of the waves might ordain. They drifted ashore on this uninhabited island—uninhabited save by a curious half-human, half-bestial monster, Caliban, whom Prospero eventually compels to be his servant. Here they live, the island supplying them with the necessaries of life, until to the vessel in which the royal party are travelling, there occurs a strange mischance, caused by the storm raised by Prospero through his magical art. Strange adventures happen to all the travellers who land on this enchanted island. Sebastian and Antonio are prevented from murdering Alonzo, and eventually they are all confounded by the discovery that they are all in the power of Prospero, the dreaded magician, on whom they had inflicted so deadly an injury. But the medium through which forgiveness is to be secured is the love which Prince Ferdinand has conceived for Miranda. These two lovers plight their troth to each other, and Prospero consents to the union after he has tried the young man's grit and goodness. Through them forgiveness is secured, Prospero gets back his dukedom, and the whole party return to Milan, leaving the island to Caliban. The play has all the marks

of a farewell work—of a play that takes long leave of scenes amid which had been cast the hopes and the fears, the troubles and the triumphs of a busy life.

Dr. Garnett well says of the plot of *The Tempest:* "It is not one of those whose interest consists in strong dramatic situations. The course of the action is revealed from the first. The action is simple and uniform, and all occurrences are seen converging slowly towards their destined point. No play perhaps more perfectly combines intellectual satisfaction with imaginative pleasure. Above and behind the fascination of the plot and the poetry, we behold Power and Right evenly paired and working together, and the justification of Providence producing that sentiment of repose which is the test of every true work of art."

The characters are limned in Shakespeare's most incisive and powerful style. Prospero is what we could fancy Shakespeare becoming in old age—wise, prescient, intolerant of wrong-doing, but wonderfully patient and sympathetic towards human weakness and frailty. Shakespeare, all through his dramas, has been revealing the progressive attainment of what to him was the greatest of all governments and kingdoms, the government of oneself, otherwise the Kingship of Self-Control. "My mind to me a kingdom is" ran the words of Dyer's old song, and Shakespeare's philosophy of life, like Prospero's, consisted in the attainment of that state. To them both earthly dignities were now of little account. As the mighty sage or wizard—great wisdom being regarded as great magic, *teste* Roger Bacon—Prospero had attained to a vaster kingdom than earth's sovereignty could give, to wit, the Kingship of Self-Control over his own mind, will, and imagination. When a ruler, he had committed the deadly sin of neglecting his people for his studies. During the years of solitary meditation on the island, he had found time not only for repentance but for realising where and how he had erred, and to acquire

such a calm, sane, well-balanced control over his mind and will that he became a "sage" in the truest and highest sense of the word—one who possesses the *sagesse* or sagacity to rule himself in all possible relations. After struggling with the powers of evil both within and without himself, until he brought them into subjection to his will, he stood forth now the man whose imagination, as well as his mind and will, were absolutely under control. Charles Cowden Clarke says that Prospero had a revengeful nature. He thereby revealed the fact that he had never penetrated below the surface of the character. By his skill in magic, as we learn, Prospero had discovered that his mortal enemies were to enter, at a certain hour, within the radius of the influence of his art. He raises a storm, causes them to land on his island, so that they come under his power, and he uses that power with noble self-restraint—for what end?—simply the recovery of his dispossessed dukedom. Wherein lies revengefulness there? Is it not rather another instance of the sublimity of his Kingship of Self-Control? Though wisdom is his province, with the experience that comes of trial, he will know now how to rule with temperate and calm strength, avoiding the mistakes of the past. If, however, magic has won these triumphs, it was among the studies in bygone days, which led him to be untrue to the responsibilities of rulership. Therefore, in the days of his recovered dignity as rightful Duke, it will doubtless be abjured. His duty now will be in consulting daily and hourly for his people's weal. Shakespeare also was taking leave of the stage, probably because, with the clear-eyed vision that comes with the Kingship of Self-Control, he realised that his powers, mental and imaginative as well as physical, were failing. It was his duty, therefore to lay down the sceptre of dramatic supremacy while his genius was still in all its strength, because failing powers meant imperfectly discharged

duty. Accordingly, both Prospero and Shakespeare spoke in that final declaration by the grand old magician-sage of *The Tempest*—

> —" when I have requir'd
> Some heavenly music, (which even now I do,)
> To work mine end upon their senses, that
> This airy charm is for, I'll break my staff,
> Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,
> And, deeper than did ever plummet sound,
> I'll drown my book."

Dr. Garnett remarks regarding Prospero: " His mercy is as complete [as that of Imogen and Hermione], but it is of another kind. It is rather the contemptuous indifference not only of a prince who feels himself able to despise his enemies, but of a sage no longer capable of being very deeply moved by external accidents and the mutations of earthly fortune." [1]

Gervinus also says: " Prospero, in his island kingdom, seems now for the first time to learn discipline and the art of governing Self as well as others. Experience had taught him. He keeps all around him in strict subjection . . . even his spirits serve him trembling. His misfortunes have made him careful and prudent, indignant and severe. But this severity does not detract from his goodness, his resentment does not disincline him to reconciliation, his desire for retribution and his anger at the unnatural conduct of the princes do not prejudice his noble nature, nor lead him to abuse his power. . . . Being both wise and good, Prospero uses his paternal authority over Miranda with love and severity; in like manner also he uses his power over the spirits, to all except Caliban, on whom to the very end he keeps a tight hold, knowing the devilish as well as the brutish nature of the monster." [2]

We come now to Miranda, whose character has always been a synonym for all that is compassionate

[1] Irving Shakespeare.
[2] *Commentaries*, one vol. edition, p. 792.

and earnestly sympathetic. She is another of the richly gifted women whom Shakespeare only in his last period seemed able to depict. We have a Juliet all passion and devotion, sensuously warm and witching like one of her own matchless Veronese nights; a Sylvia holy, fair, and wise; a Helena full of the martyrdom of self-sacrifice; a Hero and a Celia of softness and of sweetness all compact; a Viola whose very gravity is seductive because it makes sorrow beautiful; we have an Isabella, an uncanonised saint, yet pure and good as any on the calendar; an Ophelia whose loveliness must have been rare to bring a Hamlet to her feet. All these have their distinctive excellences, making them stand out from all the others in the glorious gallery of Shakespeare's women for some quality not very rare perhaps, but which is possessed by them in superabundant measure. We have, however, nothing approaching Imogen, Perdita, and Miranda in those elements in which they all three participate. They all three possess that tranquillity of spirit under the strongest emotions, which can only proceed from a soul firmly centred on the three virtues of fidelity, purity, and truth. Miranda typifies the quiet reign of unsullied purity in an innocent heart, the pool of whose affections has only been stirred by the ripples of filial devotion. From early childhood she has dwelt apart with her father in the enchanted island, her spirit slowly developing into womanly strength, until the advent of the great tidal wave of love, in her meeting and intercourse with Ferdinand, swept away all barriers. Then in a moment the child drops away from her like the outer shell of the chrysalis when the butterfly bursts forth, and she becomes the loving woman. Imogen's cardinal virtue was fidelity, Perdita's sweet reasonableness, and Miranda's sympathetic pity. She falls in love through pitying Ferdinand, for then she realises that where one sympathises with another the gates of the heart are already

open for the entry of love. Though she has never seen a man before, yet she understands that with such a companion the bliss of existence would be complete. The happiness of her island state—that state which she thought had supplied every need of her soul—had been great, but now she looked back on it as something that had been, though at the time she knew it not, entirely inadequate. Love brooks no reservations when once it gains admittance to the heart, and filial love was now absorbed in a greater. Secluded though her life had been, there was in Miranda a native dignity which would enable her with such a partner to discharge the honours of any station to which her future at the Milanese Court might call her.

Miranda has evoked many tributes of admiration. Coleridge says: "With love, pure love, there is always an anxiety for the safety of the object of it, a disinterestedness, by which it is distinguished from the counterfeits of its name. I do not know a more wonderful instance of Shakespeare's mastery in playing a distinctly rememberable variation on the same remembered air than in the transporting love-confessions of Romeo and Juliet, and Ferdinand and Miranda. There seems more passion in the one, and more dignity in the other, yet you feel that the sweet girlish lingering and busy movement of Juliet and the calmer and more maidenly fondness of Miranda might easily pass into each other."

Mrs. Jameson writes: "We might have deemed it impossible to go beyond Viola, Perdita, and Ophelia as pictures of feminine beauty, to exceed the one in tender delicacy, the other in ideal grace, and the last in simplicity, if Shakespeare had not done this, and he alone could have done it. Had he never created a Miranda we should never have been made to feel how completely the purely natural and the purely ideal can blend into each other. The character of Miranda resolves itself into the very elements of

womanhood. She is beautiful, modest, tender, and she is these only. They comprise her whole being, external and internal. She is in fact so perfectly unsophisticated, so delicately refined, that she is all but ethereal."

Heine says: "Miranda is representative of a love which without historic influence can develop its highest ideality like a flower in a virgin soil which only fairy feet may tread. The songs of Ariel have moulded her heart, and sensuality has never appeared to her but in the revolting form of Caliban. The love, therefore, which Ferdinand inspires is not merely naïve, but of a holy sincerity, of a primeval purity verging on the awesome." [1]

Ferdinand, who had inspired this love, is a good man as well as a good prince. He had at last realised what the privilege of a man as opposed to the prerogative of a prince really meant since he came to the island. Had he not stepped outside the circle of conventional society he would never have come to understand the matter. On the enchanted island he, the Prince of Naples, was only the magician's log-bearer. That was the first lesson he learned regarding the relative nature of all human rank, which only holds if others are present to accord it deference and respect, and are moreover prepared to concede the prerogatives of title. When Frederick had learned his lesson of relative obedience, the restrictions were withdrawn, and he was free to go and to be what he would. Prospero, in his day, had been made to learn his lesson, and he in turn took care that Ferdinand, if he were to be his daughter's husband, should learn his at an earlier age. He who knows how to obey knows how to rule. Ferdinand's character hitherto had been of negative because of undeveloped goodness. A few hours of association with the magician-sage killed the weeds in his nature and stimulated the growth of the noble

[1] Heine, *Shakespeare's Mädchen und Frauen*, p. 345.

virtues. As Lowell aptly says in *Among My Books*: "Ferdinand is nothing more than Youth compelled to drudge at something he despises till the sacrifice of will and the abnegation of self win him his ideal in Miranda."

The "Court Group" is of mixed quality. Alonzo, King of Naples, Sebastian, his brother, Antonio, the usurping Duke of Milan, and Gonzalo, an old lord from the Milanese Court, are men who had never realised that their position in life was merely a relative one, presupposing a higher and a lower social grade for each. Alonzo, the highest in rank, was the only one who took the lesson of the supposed wreck and the alleged drowning of his son Ferdinand seriously to heart, as punishments for the sin committed towards Prospero long years ago. Gladly did he admit his fault, and enjoyed the bliss of a forgiveness that was the result of expiation. The two others, Sebastian and Antonio, have to suffer a little more and to be terrified a little further before they too confess their sin. Antonio, Prospero's younger brother, is an essentially evil nature, whose repentance is only wrung from him by fear. The good old Gonzalo, contrariwise, is one of those noble souls to whom evil of all kinds is so abhorrent, that he becomes almost a bore by the frequency wherewith he declaims against the evils which man's inhumanity has inflicted on man. He has an economic nostrum for the relief of social distress, to wit, an ideal Commonwealth, the constitution of which is largely copied from Montaigne. In his State no one would suffer unjustly, and the common good of all would be the aim of all.[1]

Stephano and Trinculo provide the humour of the play, and according to Shakespeare's usual method of furnishing *antitheta* or contrasts, are introduced where

[1] Cf. *Tempest*, II. i. 147 ff., and Montaigne's *Essays*, Florio's translation, bk. i. chap. xxx., "Of the Caniballes." Note the resemblance between the two in language.

they appear—viz., immediately after the scene wherein the King and his Court are discussing political problems —in order to cast ridicule on the idea of deputed authority. Stephano has by Caliban been made king of the island, provided that he will kill Prospero. The scene in which Caliban, Stephano, and Trinculo take part is a rich travesty of the grave debate that had been going on as to the right to rank and authority. If rank and office go by birth and hereditary right, what of Prospero and his usurping brother? If Alonzo were killed by Sebastian and Antonio, as they are plotting to do, even as Stephano and Caliban are conspiring to slay Prospero, would Sebastian be able to smother the reproaches of conscience as Antonio had done in the case of his brother when Prospero was sent to his death in the leaky boat? As, moreover, Stephano, Trinculo, and Caliban are to receive their punishment immediately by being hunted by bandogs, for attempting to create a revolution in a small way, so will Sebastian and Antonio receive their deserts for their treachery in attempting to effect a revolution and change of government on a larger scale. Meantime the *Deus ex machinâ,* Prospero, is preparing the scenes that are to inflict punishment on these plotters, both high and low.

Finally, we have Caliban and Ariel. The former is a monster born of a union between a fiend-father and a witch-mother. He was brutish in his instincts, animal in his appetites, and wholly bestial in his habits. Yet over against these qualities he had a soul which was capable of being raised in the intellectual scale, as Prospero indicates. But the terrible revelation came to the latter that in exact ratio as he developed the mental calibre of the monster he furnished it with greater potentiality for evil. Yet, nevertheless, Caliban had thoughts of God, of justice, with a dim sense of right and wrong, and curious ideas of natural beauty. Browning's great poem, *Caliban on*

Setebos, and Renan's novel, *Caliban*, show different views of the mental development of the monster.

Coleridge thus analyses Caliban: "The character is wonderfully conceived: he is a sort of creature of the earth, as Ariel is a sort of creature of the air. He partakes of the qualities of the brutes, but is distinguished from brutes in two ways, by being mere understanding without moral reason, and by not having the instincts which pertain to absolute animals. Still Caliban is, in some respects, a noble being; the poet has raised him far above contempt; he is a man in the sense of the imagination, all the images he uses are drawn from nature and are highly poetical; they fit in with the images of Ariel."

Ariel, on the other hand, is one of the most exquisite beings the genius of Shakespeare has ever drawn. He has no analogue in literature unless it be Scott's "White Lady of Avenel." These two spirits are alike in this, that they are both outside the range of the divine economy of love. They have intelligence, but seemingly no soul, and there is no power of love. Ariel experiences joy and sorrow, develops a tricksy rather than a malicious attitude towards Prospero, and has to be kept in order by threats, now of being again immured in the cleft oak, anon of not receiving his freedom. His fidelity to Prospero, however, knows very few lapses. He is a faithful servitor of his will and behests, he works willingly for a word of praise, yet when the end comes and his freedom is granted him, while it is with an expression of regret that Prospero says farewell to his "chick," whom he had previously said he should miss, from Ariel no expression of regret comes. He was compact of intelligence, but not of love or gratitude. Once more to quote Hazlitt ere we close. He says, speaking of Ariel: "Nothing was ever more finely conceived than this contrast between the material and the spiritual, the gross and the delicate. Ariel is imaginary power, the swiftness of

thought personified. When told to make good speed by Prospero, he says, 'I'll drink the air before me.'" To this we may add what Coleridge says: "Is there anything in nature from which Shakespeare caught the idea of this delicate and delightful being with such child-like simplicity, yet with such preternatural powers? He is born neither of heaven nor earth, but as it were between both, like a May-blossom kept suspended in air by the fanning breeze, which prevents it from falling to the ground."

Stopford Brooke, in his *Ten Plays of Shakespeare*, remarks: "Ariel is but air, the free spirit of the air, subtle, changeful, in incessant motion, lively, all-penetrating like ether, having power in the air and water, in fire, and to the depths of the earth. To-day we might call him electricity . . . and as the ethereal forms of matter vibrate between the molecules of the earth and water, so Ariel can live in the seas, and the vapours of the clouds, and in the depths of the earth—

> —'I come
> To answer thy best pleasure; be 't to fly,
> To swim, to dive into the fire, to ride
> On the curl'd clouds; to thy strong bidding task
> Ariel and all his quality.'"

The lyrics which Ariel sings throughout the play, always to advance the action of the piece, are among the most beautiful in the entire Shakespearian drama. "Come unto these yellow sands;" "Honour, riches, marriage-blessing;" "Full fathom five thy father lies;" "While you here do snoring lie;" "Where the bee sucks," etc., have been favourites from Shakespeare's time till now. Wilson's *Cheerful Ayres or Ballads* have, it is said, preserved the original music of most of those exquisite songs.

The Tempest after the Restoration and the reopening of the theatres was a very popular play for many years, especially after the version by Davenant and Dryden had been prepared. There was, however,

more of the work of the adapters than of Shakespeare in the piece, and lovers of our national dramatist rejoiced when at length that wretched travesty of a great play was banished from the boards, though it held its position there for nearly a hundred years.

CHAPTER XIII

THE SHAKESPEARE APOCRYPHA AND EDITIONS OF THE FOLIO

WE come now to consider certain plays to which the name of the "Shakespeare Apocrypha" has been very justly applied. In using this word we seek to employ it in its best not its worst sense. There are one or two dramas upon which Shakespeare expended a considerable amount of work, as, for example, *Henry VIII.* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, before handing them over to a collaborateur, while there were others on which he did little more than revise a scene or two, or perhaps give directions regarding the plot or the production, as in the case of *Edward III.*, *Arden of Feversham*, *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, *The Merry Devil of Edmonton*, *The Tragedy of Locrine*, *Thomas Lord Cromwell*, *The London Prodigal*, *The Birth of Merlin*, *The Comedy of Mucedorus*, *Fair Em*, *The Puritan*, *The Life of Sir John Oldcastle*, etc.

As regards *Henry VIII.*, which was included in the Folio of 1623, Shakespeare certainly expended a great amount of labour upon it, writing, in fact, nearly half the play before passing it on to John Fletcher. Readers, however, may ask, Why include *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Pericles* and exclude *Henry VIII.*? In this work we desire to keep our survey strictly to such plays as cannot by any stretch of critical ingenuity be regarded as coming within the category "Shakespearian Apocrypha," that is, to plays which were either wholly or in very large part the work of Shakespeare. Accordingly we shall give only a very brief account of *Henry VIII.*, and merely cite a few outstanding details regarding the others.

HENRY VIII. 1613

Henry VIII. was probably written in 1613, and the metrical evidence places it at the foot of the list of dramas in which Shakespeare took any part. It was not published until the Folio of 1623. The scene of the drama is laid in London and Westminster, also once at Kimbolton; while the Time-Analysis of the piece gives the duration of the dramatic action at ten days with intervals. The metrical tests furnish the following evidence on the question of date: Out of the total length of the play, 2754 lines, there are only about 67 lines of prose, and 2613 of blank verse in Shakespeare's very latest manner. Rhyme almost disappears. Of pentameter or five-measure lines there are only 16 rhyming lines, and of rhyme in other measures the percentage falls below 1 per cent. Feminine endings register 47.3 per cent., while there are 45 light and 37 weak endings in Shakespeare's part. The percentage of enjambed lines is 46.3, or of stopped lines against run-on lines a comparative percentage of 1 to 2.03; while the speech-ending test gives a return of 72.4 per cent. These figures bear out the contention that *Henry VIII.* contains by far the latest work that has proceeded from Shakespeare's pen, and that the play stands at the end of the list of his dramas.

The portions of the play that are unmistakably Shakespearian are as follows: Act I. Sc. i.-ii.; Act II. Sc. iii.-iv.; Act III. Sc. ii.; Act V. Sc. i., the other parts of the play being by John Fletcher, who was Shakespeare's closest and most successful imitator.

The sources whence the materials of the drama were drawn were Holinshed's *Chronicle*, Cavendish's *Life of Wolsey*, and Foxe's *Acts and Monuments of the Church.*

The plot is very feeble and the interest dies away greatly towards the end of the drama. The contrast and conflict between the two massive and majestic

figures of Henry and Wolsey alone give point to the play; and the determination of the King to marry Anne Bullen at all costs signs Wolsey's death warrant. There the interest of the play really ends.

As to the characters of the drama, the three which arouse our interest are Henry VIII., Wolsey, and Anne Bullen. The first-named is a gross, passionate, vulgar-minded autocrat, whose iron will imparts to his figure a sort of majesty and reverence that his life and actions would not of themselves arouse. He cannot endure contradiction, and regards the country as being only a sort of milch-cow to minister supplies for his pleasures. A lower ethical tone prevails in the play, and it is Wolsey, not Henry, who gives the drama its dignity of utterance and its stateliness of movement. All that is venerable and grand in the Romish Church seems centred in this sublime figure. He makes many mistakes, but they do not proceed from self-seeking, and he goes to his death after his fall with the cry that has rung down the centuries since the play was written—

> "Cromwell I charge thee, fling away ambition;
> By that sin fell the angels; how can man, then,
> The image of his Maker, hope to win by 't?
> . . . Be just, and fear not;
> Let all the ends thou aim'st at be thy country's,
> Thy God's, and truth's: . . .
> . . . O Cromwell, Cromwell!
> Had I but serv'd my God with half the zeal
> I serv'd my king, he would not in mine age
> Have left me naked to mine enemies."

Anne Bullen is a weak, kindly, sensuous-minded woman, with a heart that can sincerely pity Queen Katharine, yet is dazzled by the prospect of the glory of a crown. One sees at a glance that such a woman, whose hold on the King is only that of the flesh and not that of high-souled virtue, will not keep her place long. The contrast between her and the meek-minded yet lofty-spirited Katharine is skilfully managed.

The other characters are all clearly and effectively conceived and executed, while the popular atmosphere of the time is powerfully represented.

It was the discharge of the cannon in honour of the King's entry in this play which occasioned the burning down of the Globe Theatre, 29th June 1613.

THE TWO NOBLE KINSMEN. 1612-13

This play was written in all likelihood about 1612-13, and was published in 1634. Though usually regarded as Fletcher's drama, Shakespeare's actual share in the workmanship being small, the impress of the greater dramatist's genius is very apparent in the matter of planning and shaping the play. Out of its total length of 2734 lines, 179 are in prose, and 2468 in blank verse of a rather emasculated type, abounding in feminine endings, in light and weak endings, while the lines are nearly all of the enjambed type. As to the sources whence the materials of the play were drawn, the "Knight's Tale" in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, and the two plays, *Palæmon and Arcyte*, by R. Edwards (1566), and *Palamon and Arsett* or *Arcite* (*circa* 1590), contained all the facts that were required. The characters are drawn with skill and incisiveness, the contrast between Palamon and Arcite being effectively presented. Of the female characters, Emilia is a charming woman nobly planned, whose heart in a very difficult position showed itself true to the highest and noblest instincts of womanhood.

EDWARD III. 1595-6

The Raigne of Edward III. was published in 1596, being reprinted in 1599, 1609, 1617, 1625. It is based on Holinshed, Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*, and Froissart. The share, if any, which Shakespeare took in this must have been very small, as there is nothing, either in style or characterisation, reminiscent of any

of his periods. To our mind it seems rather an imitation of Shakespeare's early Marlowesque manner, by such a writer as Thomas Dekker. Mr. Fleay thinks the love-story to be by Shakespeare, while Alfred Tennyson said to Mr. Fleay, "I can trace the Master's hand all through the play." Of course there are reminiscences of Shakespeare in the language and imagery, because his influence was strong on all the writers of the period.

Arden of Feversham. 1592

This play was published in 1592, when Shakespeare was still at the outset of his career. It certainly gives evidence of the Master's hand in its massive conception and original execution, also in the intensity of its passion and pathos, as well as in the vigour of its imagery and diction. The style is frequently reminiscent of Shakespeare, and probably he had prepared it for the stage in his play-cobbling era. The drama on its title-page gives a summary of the action, "The True and lamentable tragedie of M. Arden of Feversham in Kent, who was most wickedlie murdered by the means of his disloyall and wanton wyfe, who for the love she bare one Mosbie, hired two desperat ruffins, Black Will and Shagbag, to kill him." The murder which was thus dramatised took place in 1551. The play was reprinted in 1599 and 1633, and was first assigned to Shakespeare in 1770.

The Yorkshire Tragedy. 1608

This drama is also founded on a crime—viz., the murder in 1604 of his two young children by Walter Calverly of Calverly in Yorkshire. He also stabbed his wife and attempted the life of another child. The deed was narrated in a ballad of 1605, and the tragedy is described, "Not so new, as lamentable and true.—Written by William Shakespeare." It was published

in 1608. There are a few passages that contain lines which sound like Shakespeare's, but the resemblance is very vague and visionary. The thought, however, is usually so crude as scarcely to be worthy of him even at his earliest period.

The Merry Devil of Edmonton. 1608

Is more of a farce than a play, and though there are lines and phrases which show traces of Shakespeare's hand, yet they are so faint that the work done must have been merely of an emendatory character. The merit of the play is not great, but it may have filled a gap for the "King's Players." It was published in 1608.

The Other Apocrypha

The Tragedy of Locrine, published in 1595; *Thomas Lord Cromwell,* printed in 1602, and stated to have been written in 1600; *The London Prodigal,* published in 1605; *The Birth of Merlin,* issued in 1662, and announced as written by Shakespeare and Rowley; *The Comedy of Mucedorus the Miller's Daughter of Manchester* was written about 1591, but not published till 1631; *The Puritan, or the Widow of Watling Street,* printed in 1607 as by "W. S.;" and *The Life of Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham,* stated also to be by Shakespeare in collaboration with Drayton, Hathaway, Wilson, and Munday, are all dramas of very mediocre quality, with here and there a startlingly fine passage or phrase that might certainly have proceeded from the pen of Shakespeare. These dramas as a whole, however, are quite unworthy of him even at his earliest period.

The Editions of Shakespeare

As is well known, the first issue of the collected works of William Shakespeare took place in 1623, the task of collecting the dramas and poems being

executed by his former fellows and friends, John Heminge and Henry Condell. As Mr. Sidney Lee says, the venture, however, was suggested by a small syndicate of printers and publishers, who undertook all the responsibility, the leading printer of the day, William Jaggard of Fleet Street, near St. Dunstan's Church, being the foremost spirit in the enterprise. Ben Jonson probably acted as literary adviser. Thirty-six plays and pieces were in all included in the volume. The "First Folio" is now extremely valuable.

The "Second Folio" was issued in 1632 by Thomas Cotes for John Smethwick, William Aspley, Richard Hawkins, Richard Meighen, and Robert Allot. It was virtually a reprint of the First. The "Third Folio," a reprint of the Second, was published in 1663 by Peter Chetwynde, who reissued it the next year with seven plays added, six of which are now regarded as having no right of inclusion, *Pericles* alone being the work of the Master. The "Fourth Folio" in part, printed in 1685 for H. Herringman, E. Brewster, R. Chiswell, and R. Bentley, reproduces the Folio of 1663-4 without change, repeating also the apocryphal pieces.

The first edition by an independent editor was that of Nicolas Rowe in 1709, followed by Alexander Pope's in 1725, while the third was by Lewis Theobald in 1733; the fourth edition was that of Sir Thomas Hanmer in 1744; the fifth, Bishop Warburton's in 1747; the sixth, Dr. Johnson's in 1765; the seventh, Edward Capell's in 1768; the eighth, George Steevens's in 1773; and the ninth, Edmund Malone's in 1790.

Since then the editions have been legion, and as in the case of the Bible, who can say when they will end? The plays have been translated into the language of almost every civilised nation on earth, and they are as profoundly appreciated and admired on the banks of the Ganges and the Amazon as on the plains of China and the uplands of Peru. Go where one will the dramas of Shakespeare are always in evidence.

Such was William Shakespeare, the Man and the Maker. That he was known and loved by his contemporaries as one of the greatest geniuses the world had as yet seen, is evidenced by Ben Jonson's noble tributes, which are sufficient answer of themselves to those who would argue that his plays were written by another. Would Ben Jonson, a rival, have written in such terms as these had he not "loved as well as known the *man?*"

Take this from Jonson's *Discoveries*—

"*De Shakespeare nostrat*[*i*].—*Augustus in Hat*[*erium*].

"I remember the players have often mentioned it as an honour to Shakespeare that in his writing (whatsoever he penned) he never blotted out a line. My answer hath been, would he had blotted out a thousand. Which they thought a malevolent speech. I had not told posterity this, but for their ignorance, who choose that circumstance to commend their friend by, wherein he most faulted; and to justify mine own candour: *For I loved the man and do honour his memory, on this side idolatry as much as any.* He was, indeed, honest and of an open and free nature; had an excellent phantasy, brave notions, and gentle expressions; wherein he flowed with that facility that sometimes it was necessary he should be stopped; *sufflāminandus erat*, as Augustus said of Haterius. His wit was in his own power, would the rule of it had been so too! Many times he fell into those things, could not escape laughter; as when he said in the person of Cæsar, one speaking to him, 'Cæsar, thou dost me wrong,' he replied, 'Cæsar did never wrong but with just cause,' and such like: which were ridiculous. But he redeemed his vices with his virtues. *There was ever more in him to be praised than to be pardoned.*"

Then read this from Jonson's commendatory poem to the Folio of 1623—

" I; therefore, will begin, Soul of the Age!
The applause! delight! the wonder of our Stage!
My Shakespeare, rise; I will not lodge thee by
Chaucer, or Spenser, or bid Beaumont lie
A little further to make thee a room;
Thou art a monument without a tomb,
And art alive still, while thy Book doth live,
And we have wits to read and praise to give."

Are these of no value? If so, then personal testimony carries no weight.

Shakespeare, however, was the glory and the wonder of his own age as of ours, not the pride of English literature alone, but the pride and the inspiration in one of the noblest literatures of the world. Taken all in all he is the greatest intellectual and imaginative force the world has ever seen—

" Here *was* a Cæsar! When comes such another? "

APPENDIX I—(See pp. 52-55)

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FROM THE METRICAL TESTS

FIRST PERIOD, OR PERIOD OF IMMATURE ART (1589 OR 1590–1593)

NAME OF PLAY.	Date of Composition.	Number of lines.	Prose.	Blank Verse.	5-Measure or Pentameter Rhymes.	Total Percentage of Rhyme.	Feminine Endings.	Light Endings.	Weak Endings.	Run-on Lines.	Speech Endings.
1 Henry VI., Part I.	1589–90	2693	nil	2379	314	10	8.2	3	1	10.4	0.5
2 Henry VI., Part II.	1591–92	3032	448	2562	122	2.9	13.7	2	1	11.4	1.1
3 Henry VI., Part III.	1592	2904	nil	2749	155	3.4	13.7	3	0	9.5	0.9
4 Titus Andronicus	1589–90	2525	43	2328	144	3.7	8.6	5	0	12.0	2.5
5 Love's Labour's Lost	1590	2789	1086	579	1028	62.2	7.7	3	0	18.4	0.10
6 Two Gentlemen of Verona	1591	2060	408	1509	116	6.5	18.4	0	0	12.4	5.8
7 Comedy of Errors	1591–92	1770	240	1150	380	19.4	16.6	0	0	12.9	0.6
8 Romeo and Juliet	1592	3002	405	2111	486	17.2	8.2	6	1	14.2	14.9
9 Richard III.	1593	3599	55	3374	170	3.5	19.5	4	0	13.1	2.9
10 Richard II.	1593	2644	nil	2107	537	18.6	11.0	4	0	19.9	7.3
INTERMEDIATE PERIOD OF THE POEMS											
Venus and Adonis	1593										
Lucrece	1594										
SECOND PERIOD, OR PERIOD OF MATURING ART (1594–1601)											
11 King John	1594	2553	nil	2403	150	4.5	6.3	7	0	17.7	12.7
12 Midsummer Night's Dream	1594	2231	441	878	731	43.6	7.3	0	1	13.2	17.3
13 Merchant of Venice	1594–96	2705	673	1896	93	4.6	17.6	6	1	21.5	22.2
14 All's Well that Ends Well	1596) 1601	2981	1453	1234	280	19.4	29.4	11	2	28.4	74.0

15 Taming of the Shrew	1595–96	2671	516	1971	169	4.4	17.7	1	1	8.1	3.6
16 Henry IV., Part I.	1596–97	3170	1464	1622	84	2.7	5.1	5	2	22.8	14.2
17 Henry IV., Part II.	1597–98	3437	1860	1417	74	2.9	16.3	1	0	21.4	16.8
18 Merry Wives of Windsor	1598	3018	2703	227	69	6.4	27.2	1	0	20.1	20.5
19 Henry V.	1598	3320	1531	1678	101	3.2	20.5	2	0	21.8	18.3
20 Much Ado about Nothing	1599	2823	2106	643	40	5.2	22.9	1	1	19.3	20.7
21 As You Like It	1599	2904	1681	925	71	6.3	25.5	2	0	17.1	21.6
22 Twelfth Night	1600	2684	1741	763	120	13.7	25.6	3	1	14.7	36.3
23 Julius Cæsar	1600–1	2440	165	2241	34	1.2	19.7	10	1	19.3	20.3
THIRD PERIOD, OR PERIOD OF HIS MATURE ART—THE PROBLEM PLAYS (1602–1609)											
24 Hamlet	1602	3924	1208	2490	81	2.7	22.6	8	0	23.1	57.6
25 Troilus and Cressida	1603	3423	1186	2025	196	8.6	23.8	6	0	27.4	31.3
26 Othello	1604	3324	541	2672	86	3.2	28.1	2	0	19.5	58.4
27 Measure for Measure	1604	2809	1154	1574	73	3.6	26.1	7	0	23.0	51.4
28 Macbeth	1605–6	1993	158	1588	118	5.8	26.3	21	2	36.6	77.2
29 King Lear	1606	3298	903	2238	74	3.4	28.5	5	1	29.3	69.1
30 Timon of Athens	1607	2358	596	1560	184	8.5	24.7	14	1	32.5	62.8
31 Pericles	1607–8	2386	418	1436	225	18.8	20.2	20	10	18.2	82.1
32 Antony and Cleopatra	1608	3964	225	2761	42	0.7	26.5	71	28	43.3	77.5
33 Coriolanus	1609	3392	829	2521	42	0.9	28.4	60	44	45.9	79.0
INTERMEDIATE PERIOD OF THE SONNETS (1609)											
Sonnets	1594–1604										
FOURTH PERIOD, OR PERIOD OF RESTFUL CONTEMPLATION (1610–1611)											
34 Cymbeline	1610	3448	638	2585	107	3.2	30.7	78	52	46.0	85.0
35 The Winter's Tale	1610–11	2750	844	1825	nil	0.0	32.9	57	43	37.5	87.6
36 The Tempest	1611	2668	458	1458	2	0.2	35.4	42	25	41.5	84.5
37 Henry VIII.	1611–12	2754	67	2613	16	0.3	47.3	45	37	46.3	72.4

APPENDIX II

BOOKS USEFUL TO THE STUDENT OF SHAKESPEARE

[*The following lists do not profess to be complete. They are simply the titles of those authorities which the writer has found to be of the greatest service to himself and his students in lecturing on Shakespeare.*]

ON THE LIFE OF SHAKESPEARE

Fuller's *Worthies.*
Aubrey, *Lives of Eminent Men.*
Rowe's "Life" prefixed to his edition of the Plays, on which were largely founded the memoirs written by Pope, Dr. Johnson, and Steevens.
Malone in his edition of the Plays, and as Prolegomena to the succeeding Variorum editions of 1803, 1813, 1821.
French's *Shakespeareana Genealogica.*
Halliwell-Phillipps, *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare* (7th edition, being the last to receive the author's additions and emendations).
Fleay in his *Life of Shakespeare, Shakespeare Manual, History of the Stage,* and *Biographical Chronicle of the English Drama.*
Nathan Drake's *Memorials of Shakespeare.*
Sidney Lee: all his volumes.
Karl Elze, *Life of Shakespeare.*
George Brandes, *Shakespeare—A Critical Study.*
W. J. Rolfe, *Life of William Shakespeare.*
C. I. Elton, *William Shakespeare, his Family and Friends.*
T. Campbell, *Life and Writings of Shakespeare.*
S. Neil, *Critical Biography of William Shakespeare.*
C. Knight, *Biography.*
Victor Hugo, *Life of William Shakespeare.*
R. G. White, *Memoirs of the Life of Shakespeare.*
H. N. Hudson, *Life, Art, and Characters of Shakespeare.*
R. Genée, *Shakespeare, sein Leben und seine Werke.*
W. C. Hazlitt, *The Man and his Work.*
Frank Harris, *The Man Shakespeare and his Tragic Life-story.*
T. Kenny, *Life and Genius of Shakespeare.*
Goldwin Smith, *Shakespeare the Man.*
The three articles on Shakespeare in the successive editions of the *Encyclopædia Britannica:* (1) the one in the 8th edition by Thomas de Quincey; (2) that in the 9th edition by Professor Spenser Baynes; (3) that in the 10th edition by Edmund K. Chambers.

ON THE PERIOD OF SHAKESPEARE

Ward's *English Dramatic Literature.*
Collier, *History of English Dramatic Poetry, Henslowe's Diary, Alleyn Papers.*
The Age of Shakespeare, by T. Seccombe and J. W. Allen.
Professor Raleigh, *Shakespeare* (English Men of Letters Series).
John Masefield, *Shakespeare.*
Symonds, *Shakespeare's Predecessors in the English Drama.*
F. S. Boas, *Shakespeare and his Predecessors.*
S. Lanier, *Shakespeare and his Forerunners.*
W. Brassington, *Shakespeare's Homeland.*
W. Tegg, *Shakespeare and his Contemporaries.*
Guizot, *Shakespeare et son Temps.*
F. E. Schelling, *English Literature during the Lifetime of Shakespeare*, also *The Elizabethan Drama.*
Winter, *Shakespeare's England.*
Drake, *Shakespeare and his Times.*
Cambridge History of English Literature, vols v. and vi.
Professor Courthope, *History of English Poetry*, vol. iv.

GENERAL CRITICISM ON THE PLAYS

E. Dowden, *Shakespeare's Mind and Art.*
A. C. Swinburne, *A Study of Shakespeare.*
Snider, *System of Shakespeare's Dramas.*
R. G. Moulton, *The Moral System of Shakespeare*, and *Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist.*
A. C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy.*
J. C. Collins, *Studies in Shakespeare.*
Stopford Brooke, *Ten Plays of Shakespeare.*
C. F. Johnson, *Shakespeare and his Critics.*
Gervinus, *Commentaries on Shakespeare*, translated by F. E. Bunnett, with Introduction by the late Dr. Furnivall.
Ulrici, *Shakespeare's Dramatic Art*, translated by Miss Dora Schmitz.
Courtenay, *Commentaries on the Historical Plays of Shakespeare.*
Kreyssig, *Vorlesungen über Shakespeare* and *Shakespeare Fragen.*
Mezières, *Shakespeare, ses Œuvres et ses Critiques.*
L. Tieck, *Dramaturgische Blätter.*
S. T. Coleridge, *Notes and Lectures on Shakespeare.*
Professor Lounsbury, *Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist.*
J. G. Orger, *Notes on Shakespeare's Histories and Tragedies.*
Charles Lamb, *Specimens of the Dramatists: Remarks on the Dramatic Poets.*
A. W. von Schlegel's *Shakespeare*, also his *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature.*

CRITICISM ON CHARACTERS

W. Hazlitt, *The Characters of Shakespeare's Plays.*
H. N. Hudson, *Shakespeare's Characters.*
W. Richardson, *Essays on Shakespeare's Dramatic Characters*

Weiss, *Wit, Humour, and Shakespeare.*
Dowden, *Shakespeare as a Comic Dramatist.*
Ehrlich, *Der Humour Shakespeare's.*
Whateley, *Remarks on some of the Characters of Shakespeare.*
Mrs. Jameson, *Shakespeare's Heroines.*
Mary Cowden Clarke, *Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines.*
Heine, *Englische Fragmente und Shakespeare's Mädchen und Frauen.*
Mrs. Elliot, *Shakespeare's Garden of Girls.*
M. Morgann, essay on Sir J. Falstaff.

CRITICISM ON THE OTHER WORKS

Boaden, *On the Sonnets of Shakespeare.*
C. A. Brown, *Shakespeare's Autobiographical Poems.*
R. Simpson, *Introduction to the Philosophy of Shakespeare's Sonnets.*
G. Massey, *The Secret Drama of Shakespeare's Sonnets unfolded.*
T. Tyler, *Shakespeare's Sonnets.*
Dowden, *Sonnets of Shakespeare.*
Furnivall, "Sonnets" in Leopold Shakespeare.
G. Wyndham, "Sonnets" in *The Poems of Shakespeare.*
G. Wyndham, *The Poems of Shakespeare.*
G. Bell and Sons' edition of the Poems.
These are additional to the editions of the Poems published in the Complete Works of Shakespeare.

THE VARIOUS ENGLISH EDITIONS OF THE WORKS

1623. First Folio, issued by Heminge and Condell. Plays only.
1632. Second Folio. Plays only.
1663–64. Third Folio. Plays only.
1685. Fourth Folio. Plays only.
1709. Rowe's edition, 7 vols. Plays and Poems. 8vo.
1723–25. Pope's edition, 7 vols. Plays and Poems. 4to.
1733. Theobald's edition, 7 vols. Plays and Poems. 8vo.
1743–44. Hanmer's edition, 6 vols. Plays only. 4to.
1747. Warburton's edition, 8 vols. Plays only. 8vo.
1765. Johnson's edition, 8 vols. Plays only. 8vo.
1767. Capell's edition, 10 vols. Plays only. 8vo.
1773. Johnson and Steevens' edition, 10 vols. Plays only. 8vo.
1790. Malone's edition, 10 vols. Plays and Poems. 8vo.
1793. Johnson and Steevens' 4th edition, by I. Reed, 15 vols. Plays only. 8vo.
1802. Boydell's edition, 11 vols. Plays only. Fol.
1803. Malone and Reed's 1st Varior., 21 vols. Plays and Poems. 8vo.
1805. Chalmers' edition, 9 vols. Plays only. 8vo.
1813. Malone and Reed's 2nd Varior., 21 vols. Plays and Poems. 8vo.
1818. Bowdler's Family Shakespeare, 10 vols. Plays only. 18mo.
1821. Malone and Boswell's edition, 3rd Varior., 21 vols. Plays and Poems. 8vo.
1825. Harness's edition, 8 vols. Plays only. 8vo.

1826. S. W. Singer's edition, 10 vols. Plays only. 18mo.
1832–34. Valpy Edition, "Cabinet Pictorial," 8 vols. Plays and Poems. Sm. 8vo.
1838–43. C. Knight's edition—Pictorial Edition, 8 vols. Plays and Poems. Imp. 8vo.
1839-43. Barry Cornwall's edition, 3 vols. Plays and Poems. Imp. 8vo.
1841–44. J. P. Collier's edition, 8 vols. Plays and Poems. 8vo.
1842–44. C. Knight's Library Edition, 12 vols. Plays and Poems. 8vo.
1844. Peabody Edition (Boston), 7 vols. Plays only. 8vo.
1847. Verplanck Edition (New York), 3 vols. Plays only. Roy. 8vo.
1851. Hazlitt's edition, 4 vols. Plays and Poems. 12mo.
1852. Lansdowne Edition. Plays only. 8vo.
1852–57. H. N. Hudson's edition (Boston), 11 vols. Plays and Poems. 12mo.
1853. J. P. Collier's 2nd edition, emendations (8 vols.). Plays only. 8vo.
1853–65. Halliwell Edition, 16 vols. Plays and Poems. Fol.
1856. Singer and Lloyd's edition, 10 vols. Plays only. 12mo.
1857. Dyce's edition, 6 vols. Plays and Poems. 8vo.
1857–60. Grant White's edition (Boston), 12 vols. Plays and Poems. Cr. 8vo.
1858–60. Staunton's edition, 3 vols. Plays and Poems. Roy. 8vo.
1860. Mrs. Cowden Clarke's edition (N.Y.), 2 vols. Plays and Poems. Roy. 8vo.
1863–66. Cambridge Edition (Clark, Glove, and Wright), 9 vols. Plays and Poems. 8vo.
1864. March's Reference Edition, 1 vol. Plays only. Large 8vo.
1865–69. C. and M. C. Clarke's edition, 3 vols. Plays only. Large 8vo.
1871. The Furness Edition, Variorum (begun), 16 vols. (in prog.). Plays only. Large 8vo.
1872–74. Knight's Imperial Edition, 4 vols. Plays only. Imp. 4to.
1874. Globe Edition (Clark and Wright), 1 vol. Plays and Poems. Sm. 8vo.
1875. Neil's Library Edition, 3 vols. Plays and Poems. 4to.
1876. Duyckind (Phil.), 1 vol. Plays and Poems. 8vo.
1877. Paton's Hamnet Edition, 1 vol. Plays only. 8vo.
1877. Leopold Shakespeare (Furnivall), 1 vol. Plays and Poems. 4to.
1878. Avon Edition (Hart), 1 vol. Plays and Poems. 8vo.
1881. Harvard Edition (Hudson), 20 vols. Plays and Poems. 12mo.
1883. Wordsworth's *Historical Plays*, 3 vols. Plays only. Sm. 8vo.
1883. R. G. White's Riverside Edition (Camb. Mass.), 3 vols. Plays and Poems. 8vo.
1884. Rolfe's Friendly Edition (N.Y.), 20 vols. Plays and Poems. 16mo.
1887-90. Henry Irving Edition, 8 vols. Plays and Poems. 4to.

1888–92. Bankside Edition (N.Y.), 20 vols. Plays only.
1889. Bedford Edition (N.Y.), 12 vols. Plays and Poems. 8vo.
1891–93. Cambridge Edition, 9 vols. Plays and Poems. 8vo.
1893–95. Cambridge Edition, 40 vols. Plays and Poems. Sm. 8vo.
1895–98. Temple Edition, 40 vols. Plays and Poems. Sm. 8vo.
1896–1900. Larger Temple Edition, 12 vols. Plays and Poems. Post 8vo.
1899–1902. Chiswick Edition, 39 vols. Plays and Poems. Sm. 8vo.
1899–1903. Eversley Edition, 10 vols. Plays and Poems. Post 8vo.
1900. Arden Edition.
1901–04. Edinburgh Folio Edition, edited by Henley and Raleigh, 10 vols. Plays and Poems. Fol.
1906–09. University Press Shakespeare Renaissance Edition, 40 vols. Plays and Poems. 8vo.
1906. Old Spelling Shakespeare. In prog. Plays and Poems. 4to.
1907. Bankside Restoration Shakespeare. In prog. Plays and Poems. 4to.
1909. Elizabethan Shakespeare (edit. Hudson), Harrap. In prog. Plays and Poems. 8vo.

THE BACON-SHAKESPEARE THEORY

Although one may personally disagree with the above theory, it has now passed the tentative stage and has been accepted by so many men of undoubted ability and scholarship that it is every student's duty carefully to investigate it. The following are one or two of the works by the leading exponents of the theory: W. H. Smith, *Was Bacon the Author of Shakespeare's Plays?* Judge Holmes, *Authorship of Shakespeare; Bacon's Promus*, edited by Mrs. H. Pott; I. Donnelly, *The Great Cryptogram;* G. G. Greenwood, *The Shakespeare Problem Restated* and *In re Shakespeare Beeching* v. *Greenwood;* Sir E. Durning-Lawrence, Bart., *Bacon is Shakespeare.*

SHAKESPEARE'S GRAMMAR AND VERSIFICATION

E. A. Abbott, *Shakespearian Grammar.*
W. W. Skeat, *Notes on English Etymology.*
B. G. Kinnear, *Cruces Shakespearianæ.*
G. L. Craik, *The English of Shakespeare.*
C. Mackay, *Obscure Words and Phrases in Shakespeare.*
J. Foster; *A Shakespearian Wordbook.*
W. Franz, *Shakespeare's Grammatik.*
Walker's *Examination of the Text of Shakespeare, with Remarks on his Language.*
B. A. P. van Dam, *William Shakespeare, Prosody and Text.*
C. Bathurst, *Differences of Shakespeare's Versification.*
E. Guest, *History of English Rhythms.*
Professor Saintsbury, *History of English Prosody.*
W. S. Walker, *On Shakespeare's Versification.*

Dr. Furnivall in the Leopold Shakespeare.
König, *Der Vers in Shakspere's Dramen.*
G. H. Browne, *Shakespeare's Versification.*

SHAKESPEARIAN LEXICONS, CONCORDANCES, ETC.

Phin, *Shakespeare Encyclopædia.*
Cunliffe, *New Shakespearian Dictionary.*
Schmidt, *Shakespearian Lexicon.*
Nares and Halliwell, *Glossary.*
Halliwell-Phillipps, *Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words.*
Dyce, *Glossary* (revised by H. Littledale).
M. Cowden Clarke, *Complete Concordance.*
J. Bartlett, *New and Complete Concordance.*
M. Edwardes, *A Pocket Lexicon and Concordance to the Works of Shakespeare.*

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